

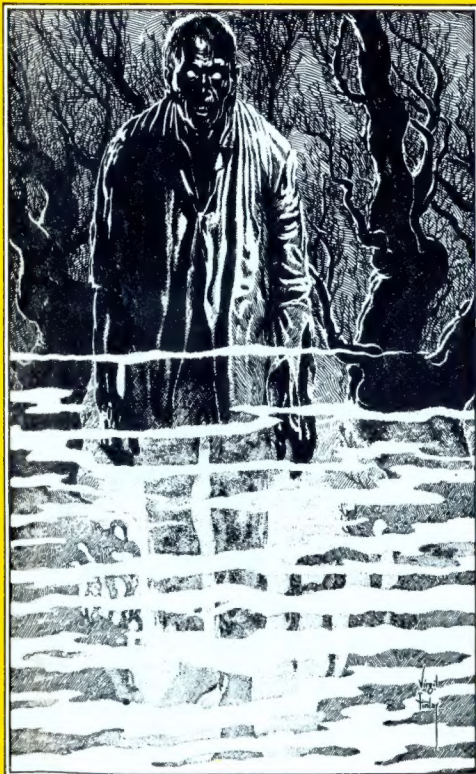
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MAGAZINE OF HORROR

BIZARRE ● FRIGHTENING ● GRUESOME



ONCE IN A THOUSAND YEARS

by FRANCES BRAGG
MIDDLETON

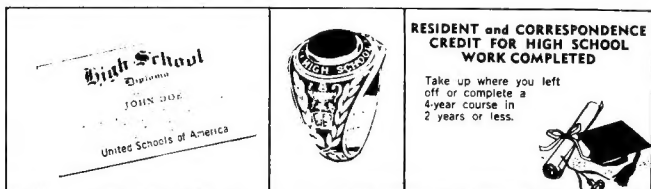
THE EYE OF HORUS

by STEFFAN B.
ALETTI

A DIAGNOSIS OF DEATH

by AMBROSE
BIERCE

DAVID H. KELLER, M.D.
H. P. LOVECRAFT



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magazine of **HORROR**

The Bizarre and The Unusual

Volume 4

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Robert A. W. Lowndes, Editor

MAGAZINE OF HORROR, Vol. 4, No. 6, November 1968 (whole number 24.) Published bi-monthly by Health Knowledge, Inc. Executive and editorial offices at 119 Fifth Avenue, N. Y., N. Y. 10003. Single copy 50c. Annual subscription (6 issues) \$2.50 in the U. S., Canada, and Pan American Union. Foreign, \$3.00. Manuscripts accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes will be carefully considered, but the publisher and editors will not be responsible for loss or damage. All payments for accepted contributions are made on publication. © 1968 by Health Knowledge, Inc. All rights reserved under Universal International and Pan American copyright conventions. Printed in U. S. A.

The Editor's Page

He would have celebrated his 78th birthday this year, were he still with us in the flesh; and for all that I still lament his going so early—before his 47th birthday—I'm not sure that I would wish such an extended sentence for Howard Philips Lovecraft. The body he inherited, the nervous system with which he was saddled, had numerous defects; and if *some* of the ailments from which he suffered might be described as psychosomatic, certainly all of them were not. Even had he been in a position to obtain a certificate of positive health from a bevy of psychotherapists (whatever that might mean), continued existence in the sullied, inherited flesh would have become unreasonably burdensome, even to one of his philosophic temperaments, long before those of us who drew a better hand in the gene/chromosome shuffle reached anything like a similar point.

As with many artists whose style, talent, and over-all integrity result in a product far superior to the average "good" work in their field at the time (whatever the defects of any one work, or, for that matter, of all of them) he may have been overrated in his lifetime. I do not believe that he was—at least he was not by editors and publishers whose patronage might have made a substantial difference to his living circumstances, except for the imperfect appreciation shown by Farnsworth Wright. In any event, the pendulum

swung to the other extreme in the decades following his death, although not universally. And it can be said in truth that his work rarely leaves anyone indifferent. The Lovecraft-haters, who include a number of very fine writers in their own right, pursue their detestation with an enthusiasm barely distinguishable at times from that of the most ardent admirers. (We must assume, as with everything else, that a certain percentage of haters have not read his stories at all, but have just read or heard *about* them; but this is par for almost any human attitude; ignorance is often an indispensable ingredient for virulent hatred.) What is most important is that his stories can still inspire admiration from those who did not grow up in the atmosphere of the time when weird fiction was available constantly in at least one magazine appearing every month—a time when his superiority to the general run was immediately apparent. And reading his letters, and articles about him by those who knew him, can arouse feelings of affection similar to the affection one may feel for a favorite character in history, centuries gone.

The 52 stories, which include three novels—all of them short novels; only *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* reaches near novel length—are still in print, and one of the three volumes, *The Dunwich Horror and other Tales*, can be found in two soft cover volumes under the titles of *The Dunwich Horror* and *The Colour out of Space*. Three volumes of marginalia and appreciations, etc., are still in print, and the long-delayed series of *Selected Letters* pro-

gresses, with the appearance of volume two, discussed in the book review section in this issue. Perhaps some who are not greatly attracted to the stories (or, at best to very few of them) will find the letters rewarding; I cannot imagine anyone who enjoys a sizeable fraction of the stories not being fascinated by the letters.

HPL appealed, and always will appeal, to special tastes, as he himself stated and implied frequently. He was aware of the limited area of appeal in the field where he wrote; he adhered to it because (as is the case with a number of fine writers who have written fiction exclusively in the science fiction area) it was the only one which captured his full intellectual and emotional interest.

Too much has been made of his physical frailties, and his psychological limitations, and some of these are so frankly and consistently revealed in many of his stories, that even so intelligent and perceptive a critic as Colin Wilson could come to patently incorrect conclusions about Lovecraft's character. Mr. Wilson, however, is an honest man and acknowledges, in the fascinating introduction of his generally excellent novel *The Mind Parasites*, "I am now willing to admit that my assessment of him in *The Strength to Dream* was unduly harsh." So far as I have heard, the other critic by the name of Wilson—Edmund—has not considered it worth his while to undergo that sort of re-examination of the evidence he had for his earlier assessment, and extend his digging into evidence appearing later, which might result in a modification of his views. Pray note that word "might"; further work on HPL might

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just as easily, for Mr. Edmund Wilson, confirm his initial judgment; however, from what I have read of him, I get the impression that he, too, is honest and would not hesitate to modify or even reverse an earlier judgment if he found convincing reason for doing so.

But the most unfortunate point about what has been made of HPL's frailties and limitations is that all this has tended to obscure something which is immediately apparent to the person who has become familiar with the general outline of Lovecraft's *entire career*; namely, that for all of the quirks, etc., there was an essential toughness in him. He was a recluse in early life, true; but when the opportunity came (and it either did not come, or he did not recognize it as opportunity—but my impression is that it did not come until after his mother's death) he did indeed come out of his shell. Not only the letters but the many appreciations by various authors and others who knew him indicated that Lovecraft enjoyed the company of kindred souls—and the letters, etc., display a very wide area of interests outside of weird fiction. He could, and did, talk for hours; and while

(Turn to page 124)

Once In A Thousand Years

by Frances Bragg
Middleton

FRANCES BRAGG MIDDLETON was a name I saw frequently on the covers of various of the better pulp detective magazines back in the 30s, so that when this story was announced on *WEIRD TALES*' "coming next issue" page in the July 1935 number, I knew that the author was no novice. What I did not know was that this would turn out to be one of the most charming and memorable stories on the subject that I had ever read; and time has confirmed this original feeling.

IT WAS A MAD THING TO DO, of course; but the three of us were together, perhaps for the last time. And we were all just out of school, and none of us was twenty-two, and each of us had had one drink too many. Also, the night was one of those, mad intoxicating nights that rarely come more than once in any man's lifetime.

Glamor. The night was thick with it; a blue, blue, star-shot sky; the Gulf spread out to meet it, white under the breath-taking beauty of the great white moon; all the rippling, gurgling voices of a summer sea, all the Circe-scents of jasmine flowers, magnolias, and orange trees in bloom. We couldn't sleep. We couldn't stay inside.

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WEIRD TALES, August; no record of separate renewal.)



illustration by
Vincent Napoli

I don't remember who suggested swimming out to the float. We were none of us accountable, exactly; but I remember we all agreed to it, though we all knew that the tide was out and running strong. Indeed, I never knew such another ebb as we felt that night. It swept us out with all the force of the current of a great river in flood-time. And it served to sober us. We were glad to reach the float and lie on it and rest. We knew we could never go back against a tide like that; we'd have to wait till morning.

So Nelson Todd and I made the best of it and slept. But when the hot sun waked us, Shane O'Farrell was gone.

It did not occur to us then to be uneasy. We swam in, dressed, and went down to breakfast. It was only then, when we couldn't find him, and when Todd's family and Todd's servants--it was Todd's father's house where we were staying--declared they hadn't seen or heard him, that we began to be alarmed. And by that time it was too late to do any good.

Of course, we searched everywhere, notified his uncle and the authorities. There was a terrible rush and scramble of coast guards, police, and newspaper men for a while. It actually looked at one time as if Todd and I might be accused of making away with him, but O'Farrell's old uncle wouldn't hear of that. Neither would he admit that O'Farrell was dead. Todd and I had no doubts on that score, we knew what that tremendous ebb was like. If it had got O'Farrell . . . but it was more than three years before we knew.

For Shane O'Farrell came back, as suddenly, as unexpectedly, as he had gone. He simply walked in on me, in the office where I was strenuously trying to learn my father's business. And when I had begun to get over the shock of his return, and to get a good look at him, I began to realize that he had changed immeasurably. He had always been tall, I remembered. Now, by some trick in the carriage of his head, in the pitch of his shoulders, he seemed inches taller. His blue eyes were clouded with something I couldn't fathom. His big, generous Irish mouth, that had used to laugh so much, was etched in sensitive, wistful lines. And his movements were more deliberate; his old impulsiveness was gone.

Shane told me, in answer to my questions, that he had been globe-trotting a bit, that he had already seen his uncle, but hadn't been able to locate Nelson Todd.

"Todd's on an engineering job in Yucatan," I told him.

He gave me a startled look. "That's queer," he said.

But when I asked him what was queer about that, he only shook his head absently. And it dawned on me suddenly that it was his own voice that was queer, as if it hadn't been used much lately, in talking English, that is.

I began to get a little warm under the collar. After all, we'd been brought up next door to each other, gone to school together, eaten each other's bread, fought each other's battles, spent each other's money, almost all our lives. He had dropped into the sea that night from with-

in a yard of me, and I wasn't going to be put off by that cool, detached, new manner of his, if I could help it.

"So you mean to tell me," I accused, "that you got tired of the float, so you just dropped off into the water, were swept out to sea and were picked up, and that you've just been wandering over the face of Earth ever since, without money, without letting your friends know . . ."

"Oh, I was with friends," he told me casually. "That is," with the manner of one conscientiously trying to tell the exact truth, "that is, they were friends after I met up with them."

And for a while he just sat there, staring out the window of that eighteenth-story office, but seeing nothing, hearing nothing, I could have sworn, of the dingy, humming streets below. And my patience broke all of a sudden, like a blown-up balloon.

"But where have you been?" I almost yelled at him. "Great Scott, man, do you think you can go out like the flame of a candle and then bob up again without a word of warning, and expect nobody to take any notice of it? Haven't the reporters got hold of you yet?"

"No," he answered mildly, still staring out toward the smoky horizon. "Uncle John and you are the only ones who know yet that I'm back. I don't want—publicity."

"Well, you'll get it," I exploded. "Dead men can't come alive without getting into the papers. Where have you been?"

"In the Sargasso Sea," he answered quietly, and smiled a little, secret smile.

I think I was never quite so angry in my life before. "So that's what you mean to tell the papers!" I snorted witheringly. "I suppose that wouldn't get you publicity in large, handsome gobs? The Sargasso Sea that's so famous and so reeking with mystery! And you mean to tell me you got there—by swimming, was it?—with nothing but a pair of bathing-trunks to help you along?"

He burst out laughing, quite like his old self for the moment. It was the first sign of *reality* I'd seen in him since he came.

"Oh, I had a striped silk dressing-gown before I got there," he explained. But then his laugh broke off in the middle and his eyes grew vague again. "Saint Brandan's Isle, you know. You've read about it . . ."

"Sure," I snorted. "I've read about it. About the Seven Cities of Cibola, too, and the voyages of Madoc and Maeldune, and a thousand other marvels. But I never expect to see any of them, and you don't either."

"No, I never expect to see any of them," he repeated, and his eyes grew more clouded than ever.

I banged the drawers of my desk shut and dragged him out to lunch. That night I took him to a show, but he never really waked up. He still liked me, I think—as much, that is, as it was left in him to like anyone. He dropped in every day, but he wouldn't talk; and that queer, detached manner of his bothered me.

When he did break silence, it was always to say something strange and unexpected.

"Do you believe in the impossible?" he asked one night, when we were smoking in the living-room of the two-by-four apartment which was all I could afford in town.

"It depends on what you call the impossible," I answered, puzzled. "Columbus did it in his day. Peary did it in ours. So did the Wright brothers. Everything was impossible till somebody did it."

"In other words," he said slowly, "nothing is really impossible?"

"Not after it's been done," I told him, with all the wisdom of twenty-five.

"Then if I told you—"

But he broke off there, and that absent look came into his eyes again. I admit I was worried about his sanity. His uncle was too; I know, because he told me. But we didn't either of us know what we ought to do.

He grew more and more restless through the winter. He went to the public library almost every day and dug into a lot of what would have been called ungodly volumes not so very many years ago. Folklore. Old legends about Atlantis, Antillia, Lemuria. All he could lay his hands on about archeological research in Crete, Egypt, Mexico, Yucatan, a dozen other moldy civilizations. There was nobody to interfere with him, he had money enough, which his old uncle had carefully nursed along for him while he was gone. He didn't have to work, but it did seem a pity for him to throw his life away—as he seemed bent on doing.

And that word "impossible." It seemed to haunt him. He wanted to believe something, or to make me believe something. I got wise to that fact at last. I'd known for a long time that he must have stumbled on some discovery or other, probably remarkable, even epoch-making. He was eating his heart out about it, too. He needed, desperately, to let it to the air, but it was a long time before I could get him to talk.

And when he did start, it was just by bits and snatches. I had to piece them together myself, but when I did begin to get his drift I was eager enough for him to go on.

"Do you know anything about heredity?" he demanded once.

"Only that most people look more or less like their parents and inherit their debts or their property," I said.

"No, I mean—" He stopped, and it looked as if he was going off into one of those far-away silences again. But he didn't. "No, I mean the principles of heredity that make us what we are. A man doesn't always resemble his close kin. There are throwbacks sometimes. You take a case where two dissimilar breeds have been crossed, white man and Indian, say. No matter how carefully the alien blood is bred out, sooner or later a child will be born into that family who has all the marks of a full-blood Indian. Now such things do happen, not frequently, but often enough to establish a rule. How do *you* explain that?"

"I don't know that I ever tried," I told him. "But I suppose it was because the kid in question wasn't very choosy. Instead of taking his hair from granddaddy Jones and his eyes from grandmother Smith and his short temper from great-great-grandfather Whosit, the cattle rustler, he just grabbed off all the characteristics of old Chief Rain-in-the-Face and let it go at that. I dare say such things happen oftener than we think. Where there is no mixture of races it isn't noticeable, but lots of times you hear people say, 'I declare I don't know who that child takes after, nobody in the family that I ever saw.' But what's the point, O'Farrell?"

"Just this," and his face was very intent and sober. "Suppose someone could inherit *all* his characteristics from just *one* ancestor, with nothing at all from any of the others—what then?"

"Why, then, probably, he'd be a monkey," I grinned. "At that, they're born with tails sometimes, you know. You see it in the papers, and it probably happens sometimes, too, when it doesn't get into the papers."

"Yes, but"—O'Farrell was dead in earnest now—"but if he inherited everything from just one ancestor, all his characteristics of mind as well as body, then wouldn't he remember *all that that ancestor ever knew*?"

I was dumfounded, and uneasy, but I tried to hide my fears. I wanted to draw him out, if possible, get at the thing that was festering in his mind.

"You mean," I said slowly, feeling my way, "that you would explain in that way the queer feeling we have sometimes that we have lived

before, that we can almost remember things which we know we never saw — "

"Exactly!" eagerly. "But if you had inherited *all* your brain from just one ancestor, then you'd remember clearly, wouldn't you? Don't you see that that *could* happen?"

"Oh, yes," I granted carelessly. "It might — once in a thousand years."

"Once in — " He stared at me, his face as white as paper. He looked so sick I ran and got him a drink. But he got over his agitation shortly; his color came back. "But that was only a guess you made," he finished, as if taking comfort in the thought.

"Of course, it was a guess," impatiently. "A guess just like yours."

"No, I'm in earnest."

But he wouldn't say anything more then. It was weeks before I got the rest of it, and even yet I doubt if I ever did get it all.

IT SEEMS THAT HE COULDN'T SLEEP THAT NIGHT, out there on the float. That luminous, glamorous moonlight, the swiftly running ebb, all the scents and sounds and witchery about him wrought him up to a tremendous pitch. He said he just lay there repeating lines about the sea that had struck in his mind from England Lit., especially from Swinburne and Tennyson — he'd dug in pretty deep, I remembered, that last year at the U. He quoted a lot of it. He said that night, for the first time so far as he was concerned, "The sea moaned round with many voices" — and he understood them all. That for the first time he could actually feel all "the light and sound and darkness of the sea." And at last he found himself repeating that thing of Masfield's:

"Once in a hundred years the lemmings come
Westward, in search of food, over the snow,
Westward, until the salt sea drowns them dumb,
Westward, till all are drowned, those lemmings go."

And then, he said, altogether without his own volition, he had slipped into the water, and the tide was racing with him out to sea. He wasn't drunk on liquor, I could swear to that myself. A glass too much, maybe, but not drunk. But the night had got him, the night and the ebbing tide and the moon that controlled the tide.

He said he wasn't worried at all. He exerted himself very little. The tide was carrying him. Even when he began to tire he wasn't actually

alarmed. When he came in contact with some wooden thing that floated by him he pulled himself aboard without any particular feeling of eagerness or relief. The moon had paled by that time and the sun was not yet up; so he couldn't see much. He could hear a sort of drowsy chittering and squeaking, though, at the other end of the raft he was on, a noise that reminded him of mice. But he didn't investigate; he was tired. And, unbelievable as it sounds, he stretched out on the wet boards and slept.

The sun roused him to what, he assured me solemnly, was to be the most stupendous day of his life, up to that time. He found himself on a raft, all right, though he was sure it hadn't been built for that purpose. It looked more like the side of a heavily timbered house, a house that perhaps had been washed away and broken up in flood-time. It rode low in the sea, and shipped water constantly, enough to keep everything wet. O'Farrell didn't mind that especially, but his companions did.

For he wasn't alone. At the end of the raft farthest from him were clustered somewhat less than fifty little brown-furred animals with small ears and short tails and tiny, white, sharp teeth. They wrinkled their noses at him and made complaining noises and seemed very damp and unhappy. He supposed they were some sort of field mice, though they were a little large for that. They reminded him of prairie-dogs, he said.

He began now to be actively concerned about his own safety. There he was, well out of sight of land, aboard a makeshift raft which the most sanguine couldn't have called seaworthy, with no food unless you counted the field mice which he wasn't hungry enough to do yet, and no clothing but his bathing-trunks. Fortunately the sea was calm. Clumsy as it was, the raft rode levelly, driving as straight ahead as if by rule and compass. And when he looked overside he understood the reason. A current as strong as that strange ebb tide of the night before was sweeping it onward—a current where by rights no current ought to be—a current of purple-blue, transparent water that was less than fifty feet wide.

O'Farrell came cautiously upright in the center of the raft. As far as he could see ahead of him, that dark-colored current cut the gray Atlantic in two. And on its flood drifted boats of many sizes, of many designs, led, or so it seemed to him, by a stately yacht, white and misty in the distance, her sails all furled.

He simply couldn't believe what he saw. He looked and looked, but the scene remained unchanged—a plain sweep of sunlighted ocean, empty but for that weird, incredible procession.

He was hungry by noon. So were the field mice; they scampered about

uneasily, chattering at him, beseeching him with their little bright eyes. He was thoroughly alarmed by this time, and finally decided to signal the nearest craft. It was too far away for his voice to carry, but, caught in a splinter of the raft, there was a weather-stained strip of sodden canvas: so he used that to signal with.

The boat just ahead of him put about and drew slowly toward him, fighting that powerful current every foot of the way. O'Farrell said it was the trimmest gasoline launch he ever saw, fitted up with a high-powered engine, but still almost powerless against that inexorable current. Its only occupant was a girl. She threw him a line as she came alongside, and he made it fast to a splintered timber. And then he got the biggest shock of the day.

For the girl suddenly cried out in a voice that was high with ecstasy and amazement and incredulity all at once. She leaped to the raft, ran over to those shy, furry little creatures and went to her knees and held her hands out to them.

"Oh, the dear, dear, funny, timid little things," she cried, a sob in her throat. "And you brought them! You lucky, lucky man! We didn't know we had any of them along."

O'Farrell said he just stood there, gaping at her, while the little field mice sniffed at her fingers and crept into her hands. He had felt like a man in a dream ever since he waked, and now he felt more like one than ever. Even the girl was unlike anyone he had ever seen before. She was as tall as he was, very fair, yellow-haired, blue-eyed. But that doesn't mean much, it was her features, he said, the pure Greek lines like those of the old statues, the grace and swing of her perfect body, which he found impossible to describe. Even her white middy blouse and skirt, her white shoes and hose, couldn't keep her from making him think of the Winged Victory. But her voice, her accent, were incredibly, as truly American as his own.

"Oh, it's wonderful, after all our years of dreams, to see them coming true!" she was murmuring. "I never thought I'd actually *travel* with them. Oh!" her voice rose on a note of purest music. "All our old dreams, changing into reality!"

O'Farrell was stupefied—she was so amazing, so utterly different from anyone he had ever known. And she was plainly so rapt with ecstasy, so absorbed in her happiness, so sure of being in the presence of an understanding and sympathetic listener, that she had thrown all reserve to the winds.

"You know how it begins," her soft voice was almost crooning. "Back

in your childhood, when you first begin to remember that other world—when bit by bit you understand the destiny you were born to—when you first realize why it is that you love and long for the sea, though you never saw it in this life—why you yearn for a burning moon in place of the cold, pale moon you know, for the low, yellow stars instead of the far-off points of light you live under, for a sky of gorgeous blue instead of the dull sky up above you—"

She drew a deep, long sigh. The little furry things had taken complete possession of her now; they were as friendly with her, O'Farrell said, as kittens. It was pretty to watch her with them, or would have been if he hadn't been so completely bewildered by it.

"And you come upon pictures that make you ache with homesickness—you don't know why. Pictures of the sea—and long, smooth beaches of shining sand—ships of long ago. Pictures of Greece, Crete, Spain, Philistia. And your half-dreams taunt and mock you, till at last, just all in a sudden flash of light, you *know*."

Her voice trailed off into contented silence. O'Farrell made no effort to break it; he couldn't think of a thing to say. And when she spoke again her tone had changed.

"Why, they're hungry!" she cried. "There is no food! Why did you bring no food along? Whatever in the world . . ."

"I didn't know I was coming," he told her bluntly. "This whole business"—he waved his hand toward the sea, the current, the parade of boats—"is no more than a nightmare to me. Maybe you can explain it."

She sat back on her heels, staring at him in an amazement that matched his own. Her eyes were enormous in her suddenly pale face. She caught her breath sharply in a sudden rush of emotion, the nature of which he could not have told.

"But this is beyond a miracle," she cried. "If you aren't one of us—if you didn't hear the call—how could you come?"

He told her. She listened intently, nodding her head from time to time, slowly and thoughtfully. She looked squarely at him out of eyes that were the steadiest, the most candid that he had ever seen.

"But this is terrible," she told him when he had finished. "I don't know what they'd do to you," with a sudden, apprehensive glance at the line of boats ahead. "You can't possibly escape, and if you don't even know where we are going—"

"I don't. It's the most impossible adventure any man ever dreamed about. Can you tell me? Do you know?"

"Oh, yes, I know." She smiled. "I am one of those who were born to know—by inheritance, rather than by learning. All of us," again that gesture toward that boats ahead, "are bound for the same place—to the kingdom of Atlas—the Garden of the Hesperides—the Isles of the Blest—"

She broke off, watching his face, which must, O'Farrell confessed, have seemed a mask of stupidity. "Can't you even guess?" she cried. But he could only shake his head.

"Do you mean," she asked him incredulously, "that you know nothing at all of that first great civilization from which all others spread—that land of tall, fair men—'for there were giants in those days'—which sent its adventurers into so many lands? Did you never hear of Cro-Magnon man, who left his drawings and his bones in the caves of France and Spain? Or the legends of the giants who lived once in the British Isles? Of the Pelasgians, the Cyclops, the Titans of Greece and Asia Minor? Hiawatha, who came to teach the savage Iroquois? Of Quetzalcoatl, the Fair God, who came to the Aztecs? Does the tale of the sunken land of Tristram's Lyonesse mean nothing at all to you?"

"Mighty little," O'Farrell admitted. "Either you're crazy or I am. I've read myths and folklore, of course, and as much of the *Morte d'Arthur* and its kindred 'literature' as they made me swallow. But it never occurred to me that I'd ever meet up with anybody who *believed* that stuff."

"But it isn't written—what we know," the girl said solemnly. "As for those legendary remnants of an ancient history that you mention—why, don't you realize that there never was a myth or a legend yet that did not have some foundation in fact?"

O'Farrell said he couldn't answer her. What with the hot sun on his head, the glare on the water, and no food for almost twenty-four hours, his head was going round and round. Perhaps the girl saw that, anyhow she came deliberately upright, and the little animals she had been petting clustered around her, running over her feet.

"Did you ever see anyone just like me?" she demanded.

"No," O'Farrell muttered. "No."

"Yet all my people are like me. I don't mean the family I was born into. No. I mean my people"—she waved her hand—"there—in front of us." She looked at him, long and hard. "And you are not one of us. You know none of the things we know. That will be very bad for you, because you can not escape. And yet you might pass for one of us, being

fair— and tall— though not quite tall enough. And you brought these"— she pointed to the little creatures at her feet.

"I don't want to see you made a sacrifice," she went on earnestly. "Maybe if I tell you— but first we must get aboard the launch. It isn't wet and sloppy like this thing, and I've plenty of food aboard."

So they made the transfer, field mice and all. The launch was fairly comfortable, well stocked with eatables, cushions, summer blankets. The girl gave O'Farrell a lounging-robe of hers and a complete man's yachting-outfit which she had worn in a college play. She had always played men's parts in the girl's plays, she said.

He went into the tiny cabin and tried them on. They fitted him— and O'Farrell was six feet tall! But she advised him to save the suit for the day of their "arrival", so he wrote the lounging-robe instead.

It must have taken about a week, he reckons, to make that incredible journey. He lay on the deck most of the time, under the awning, trying to figure things out and not succeeding. He had no theory, no answer to the puzzle presented by that girl. She spent the nights in the little cabin, but all day she was outside, always in fresh, plain, white clothes, always as perfectly appointed as if she were actually chiseled of the marble she so resembled. And she was always coolly, impersonally friendly toward O'Farrell. But she showed actual tenderness toward those pets of hers.

She had told him her name the first day. Diana. That was all. It fitted her superbly, he thought.

They were evidently quite off the steamer lanes. They met no craft, sighted no land; till, early one morning, the hazy outlines of lofty hills stood blue against the sky.

"The Isle of Saint Brandan," the girl whispered softly. "Sailors used to sight it, but when they tried to reach it, it was never there."

"Is that where we are going?" O'Farrell wanted to know.

"That is where we are going. For *we* shall reach it—we and the lemmings. We were summoned, as others are summoned—once in a thousand years."

Lemmings! He understood now. Those lines of Masfield's went swimming through his head again, and he repeated them under his breath:

"Once, it is thought, there was a westward land,
(Now drowned) where there was food for those starved things,
And memory of the place has burnt its brand
In the little brains of all the lemming Kings."

"Yes, it was there—the Greeks Isles of the Blest—Odysseus sailed west to find them—and they still are there, only the land between is lost and drowned—lost and drowned as the poor little lemmings are, those who try to go when it is not the appointed time."

"Do you remember the last lines?" O'Farrell asked. "Listen!

"But now the land is drowned, yet still we press.
Westward, in search, to death, to nothingness.

"Is that for us?"

"No, not for us. That is—"

And she sat there for a long time, her chin on her hand, watching the cloud-like hills on the far horizon. Yet it must have been by faith alone that she was so sure that the land was there. To O'Farrell it seemed much more like a mirage, a fantasmagoria, a *fata morgana*. The hills changed so, now like a low continuous range, now rearing in tall spire-like peaks, now resembling glaciers, icebergs, or ruined, battlemented castles. And as they drew nearer, the land seemed actually to divide, to break up precisely as a fleet might do, even to advance and recede in strange and complicated evolutions, while over it hung always a wavering mass of rainbow-colored mist.

"Do you wonder now," the girl asked him in a hushed, enraptured voice, "that the sailors used to tell such strange tales of Saint Brandan's Isle—how they sighted its green hillsides and its clear streams, and how it vanished like a mirage whenever they came near it?"

"I can remember one legend about a Portuguese who landed there," O'Farrell answered dryly. "The natives feasted and winned him to the king's own taste. But when he awoke he was adrift alone on the ocean. And when he reached home he found his sweetheart had been dead a hundred years or so. They showed him her tomb, I remember, by her husband's, along with the tombs of her seven daughters and her seven sons. I wouldn't like that."

"That was only a myth," she objected.

"Haven't you said a hundred times that all myths have a foundation in fact?"

"Yes," reluctantly. "And it might have happened with him as it has happened with you. It is a miracle, of course, but miracles can happen—once in a thousand years."

"You mean, I suppose, that the summons—as you call it—comes just once in a thousand years?"

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"And what is to happen to us?"

For the first time, O'Farrell said, he saw trouble in her face. Her eyes, when they met his, were clouded, her fine mouth quivered.

"For myself there can be nothing but good," she answered, "but for you, who come by accident, I don't know. They will not like it. And it lingers in my mind, like some far-off recollection only half remembered, that they can be very cruel, at times."

"In the matter of human sacrifice, perhaps?"

She winced. Her breath came sharply. "It used to be so," she admitted, unwillingly. "And I suppose they still offer sacrifices to their god of the sea—Poseidon. You know"—gently—"the Mayas of Central America did that too; only, being an inland people, they had to throw their sacrifice into an artificial pool. They had had their messenger, too, just as the Aztecs and the Iroquois had, from Atlantis."

"Atlantis!" But he realized that he wasn't really surprised.

"Atlantis, which was never completely destroyed, which still exists in the Sargasso Sea, a country so completely governed by science that its people can always avoid their enemies, so never have to fight them."

"So that tale Plato told of the Atlanteans attacking Athens is substantially true?"

"Of course. And if you want to live, you must believe as I believe, and seem to remember as I remember. For if you show doubt or ignorance, I am afraid you'll die."

And then, O'Farrell said, she talked to him a long time, carefully going over and elaborating all she had told him—all that he must, for safety's sake, be able to "remember". He had been through so much already, he said, that nothing had the power to astonish him any more. And in spite of the threat of danger in it, this unheard of adventure began to appeal to his Irish soul. If he could ever get away and tell the world about it . . .

The girl's voice broke in upon his thoughts. "You'd better dress now. I imagine our reception will be something gorgeous. Atlantis welcomes visitors from the outside world just once in a thousand years, you know."

He obeyed her, as he had got in the habit of doing. When he came out of the cabin again, he noticed for the first time long streamers of drifting seaweed. It grew thicker and thicker as they went along, swirling down the current ahead of them, behind them, beside them. But it did not interfere with them; the current took care of that.

And always the land ahead continued its changes before their eyes, resolved itself at last into a wide-horned crescent of flat white beaches and tall palaces and towers and fair, green, colorful gardens, against a background of softly folded, mist-enshrouded hills. The pure beauty of it made them gasp.

The boats were crowded closely together now. O'Farrell could see the occupants of several of them, and they were all very much alike—all tall, all fair, all yellow-haired and blue-eyed, like the girl Diana. And they, like her, were all tremendously excited. Well, O'Farrell was excited too, but not so enthusiastic as the rest.

And then, before O'Farrell's dazed, incredulous eyes, dozens of islets broke away from the tips of the crescent's horns, came swinging through the quiet sea toward the boats. Each of these tiny isles was perfect in itself, seemed to be the very embodiment of some artist's dream of an enchanted land. Many were flower gardens, ablaze with unbelievable color, alive with circling song-birds. One held a lonely palm tree, leaning a little in the southern wind, rooted in a long narrow beach where bits of white coral rolled in the swirling water. Another bore a shrine with a white altar, vine-wreathed and smoking with incense, before which a group of children decked in the goatskins and hoofs and horns of fauna were playing on flute-like pipes made of reeds.

"'Pipes of Pan'", O'Farrell thought. "'Horns of elfland'—and all the rest of it. The thing's impossible. Thirst and the sun got me on that cursed raft and I'm delirious. Well, it's a pleasant enough way to die."

But even as he told himself that, he says he knew he lied.

"Remember the floating gardens of Mexico," the girl murmured, very low. "No doubt they were copied from these."

The boats were drawn into a line now, a line that curved in the middle, a crescent to match that other crescent of the shore. And the islets swept together in a circle about them, formed an atoll, leaving the boats in a still lagoon. The current which had brought them had spent itself, dissolved. Another force had swept the islets into place, was moving the boats toward the land. And, as a climax to all the rest, the mists which had hung above the hills swept downward and outward into a vast, circular curtain, completely blotting out all the world outside.

"Now, in the name of all the pagan gods at once!" muttered O'Farrell to the girl beside him. "Do these people know how to control the elements too?"

The girl Diana smiled serenely. "Atlantis is very old and very wise," she told him quietly, "and its people have known neither war nor in-

vation nor famine nor pestilence for eleven thousand years. So, why shouldn't they have learned all that man can know in this world?"

The boats swept nearer and nearer toward the shore, with constantly diminishing speed. The sheer beauty and perfection of the scene, O'Farrell said, struck him dumb. The broad white beach, the steps and balconies of the tall white buildings, the terraces of the green hills—Plato's mounds, O'Farrell recognized—swarmed with tall, fair people. The men were garbed in tunics and kirtles, white in color, sandals, and greaves of yellow leather, and great tall headdresses ornamented with yellow feathers set in a fanwise spread from left to right. The women were bareheaded except for jeweled fillets, and wore soft flowing robes of every imaginable tint. And in the foreground, extending all along the beach, was a chorus of young men and maidens, singing. The sound of their voices surpassed anything O'Farrell had ever heard.

But the girl Diana put out a hand and touched him on the arm. She was trembling violently, and when he turned to look at her, he saw that her face was as white as chalk.

"That song," she whispered in a shaking voice. "I can understand every word of it—and you, of course, nothing at all!"

"Not one word," he said.

"Then—then—" Her tormented eyes were pleading. "Oh, I never thought once about the language! I never dreamed that I'd understand it! I had never heard it in the world outside, so how could I know? But—don't you see?—you must be careful. You must say that the ancestor from whom you inherit left Atlantis in the earliest times. They were invaded from the mainland once—the language must have altered—"

O'Farrell shook his head slowly. He felt, he said, as the "hero" of an old Greek tragedy must have felt—like one caught in a net and dragged, compellingly, inexorably, toward some unknown and unwelcome end. His had been a passive part from the beginning; he was utterly helpless, and knew it. He had no idea what might be coming, but whatever it was he must take it with as much fortitude as he was able.

"What is the use of lying?" he whispered back. "I'll never be able to get by with it. They'd better know in the beginning—"

"No, no, no!" She was tugging at his arm with both hands now. "Promise me you'll do as I tell you. Promise me!"

"All right," he assented, "but I'm afraid it won't help much. I know so little—Plato's writings—what I can remember of them—and what you've told me. They'll soon know I'm a fraud—"

"No!" she cried in a vehement whisper. "No! They shan't!"

The boats touched land. O'Farrell and the girl got ashore somehow. The lemmings scampered after them, were snatched up and petted by a hundred hands. And then the chorus of voices and of strings rose to an exultant, triumphant paean of joy and praise. The crowd pressed close. The whole scene became utterly unreal and dream-like. A perfect babble of incomprehensible words assailed O'Farrell's ears. He could not have made himself heard if he had wanted to. A group of old men, dressed in long yellow robes embroidered with curious, mystical designs, and miter-like head-dresses of gold appeared suddenly in front of him. They were he surmised, priests of the Atlantean religion. The foremost, doubtless the high priest, waved a veritable caduceus over O'Farrell's and the girl's heads in a gesture of consecration. Then they passed on, were hidden by the crowd.

With a little cry the girl Diana broke away and ran toward one of the newcomers, who was looking at her with a wild, delighted incredulity. It was a man who wore the uniform of a colonel of English infantry, with a string of ribbons across his breast. He looked to be nearing fifty, lean and tall and weary. He walked with a limp. His left arm was stiff. And a long scar, as if from a bayonet cut, ran down his left cheek. The girl had gone straight into his arms.

The throng divided. Great swaying elephants, caparisoned in yellow silk, and bearing howdahs of white ivory, made a lane for the newcomers. An elderly man wearing priestly garments emerged from the crowd and pressed a sort of diadem set with flashing stones down upon O'Farrell's head. Metal pads fitted firmly behind O'Farrell's ears, and on the instant, though the words of the singers, the babble around him still sounded outlandish and strange, it all became intelligible to him.

"I am Otar," the old man said, smiling at O'Farrell's look of incredulity, "of the healing branch of the priesthood. And this instrument is a mechanical interpreter of tongues. We find it useful in helping newcomers to adjust themselves for the first few days. So today we are all wearing them in one shape or another." For a moment he studied O'Farrell through his shrewd, keen eyes. "And who was your honored Atlantean ancestor, my son? Do not hesitate to use your native tongue. Whatever you say, I shall be able to understand." And he touched his head-dress significantly.

O'Farrell braced himself. It was, he realized, now or never.

"My ancestor left Atlantis very young," he improvised with the facility of desperation. "Atlantis had been invaded, and he remembered little

of it but the misery and oppression his people suffered at the hands of their conquerors. He had dreams of human sacrifice and games that ran with blood. He went as armor-bearer with an expedition to the mainland to make war upon a city afterward known as Athens. He was captured by these early Athenians and so never returned to Atlantis."

"Ah, that is extremely interesting!" exclaimed Otar, his blue eyes bright with interest. "And what was that armor-bearer's name?"

"His name was Gadir," O'Farrell pronounced firmly the only Atlantean name which Plato knew. After all, it was something to claim descent from the man for whom the Pillars of Herakles—the Rock of Gibraltar—had been named!

"Then you shall be called Gadir among us—Gadir, the bringer of the sacred lemmings. Your old name," with a slight gesture of his hand as if flicking from him a grain of dust, "your old name will be forgotten. Let me have your left wrist, if you please."

O'Farrell obeyed. How could he do otherwise? But he watched with some trepidation while the priest-physician drew what looked like a capsule of glass from a pocket and held it against O'Farrell's wrist. He felt but the slightest prickle. Then the old priest pocketed the glass again.

"A matter of precaution," he explained. "The outside world is, we know, a place of hideous suffering and disease. But now—you will not believe me, since your ancestor left us before our great discoveries were made—but now you will never know a moment's illness again."

And before O'Farrell had time to thank him he had bowed ceremoniously and vanished in the crowd.

Others, many others, came up and spoke to O'Farrell now, briefly or at length, making him welcome, praising him for the bringer of good fortune—the lemmings—which he had brought, asking him eager questions of the outside world, of which they had had no news for a thousand years. But now a procession was forming. O'Farrell was led to a kneeling elephant, helped into the gorgeous howdah. The girl Diana and the English colonel followed. The elephant lurched to its feet and they were off.

Before them paced at least two score of elephants, as many more were behind them. Only the newcomers and the body of priests rode. The rest of the people danced. Danced, literally, to an almost delirious music, in what seemed to be a complete abandon of joy. Escorted by the whirling figures, they turned into a wide, white-paved avenue. Towering buildings stood on either side, flush with the pavement. But there

were no people at the windows or on the balconies. Everyone, plainly, was in the street.

The girl Diana leaned forward from her seat between O'Farrell and the Englishman. Her eyes were rapt, ecstatic.

"It's like the rarest sorcery," she sighed. "If one hadn't been prepared for it so long, it would be unbelievable."

"A land so self-contained," the Englishman mused, "that it has no need of the rest of the world; so versed in the arts of concealment that it need not fear the world; so wise, so happy that it does not envy the world—yes, it is, as you say, unbelievable."

The girl looked shyly at O'Farrell.

"Colonel Carter's ancestor who bequeathed him his memories was the father of the ancestor who gave me mine," she said simply. "We knew each other instantly."

"And," interposed the Englishman, before O'Farrell could speak, "since she can not remember her father, and since my daughter—an only child—was killed in an air raid over London nineteen years ago, we have agreed to be as father and daughter. It is very good of her," he added, gently.

"It's more than I can quite take in," O'Farrell ventured dazedly. His eyes were on that beautiful, gracious street, on the lumbering elephants ahead, on the beautiful, rejoicing people who whirled and danced. His ears were hypnotized by a music of voices, of pipes, of strings, of horns, such as surely the world outside had never known. "There's something in the air that—lifts you up," he added.

The Englishman laughed gently. "Not in the air, my lad, but in that ichor in your blood-stream," he amended. "Crock that I am, it has made me feel different too. No more pain—no more disease. No death till the heart simply wears out and stops its work—or is stopped by violence. Ah, but one must wish he could tell the world about it."

"The world wouldn't believe," the girl Diana said. "Or if it did, it would want to rob us of our secrets and then, most likely, destroy us."

The Englishman sighed. "You are probably right, my dear." He turned to O'Farrell again. "You and my new daughter are the only Americans here. I am the only Englishman. There are two Irishmen, a Welshman, and a Scandinavian. The rest, as one might expect, are from the rim of the Mediterranean—from Egypt, Spain, France, Crete, Greece, Italy, Asia Minor—where Atlanteans settled long ago. There were eleven Greeks who came together on that yacht. But then, the old Greeks were certainly direct descendants."

Again his keen blue eyes rested in what seemed a trace of puzzlement on O'Farrell's face. "And you brought the lemmings. That was a fine thing, certainly."

"More an accident than anything else," O'Farrell told him. "I stumbled on them, on the way. It was Diana who fed and cared for them. Thank her, not me."

A faint pucker grew between the Englishman's fine brows. The girl gave O'Farrell a warning look.

"He was washed off his own—craft," she hastened to explain. "I was lucky enough to be able to pick them up. We came on together, you know."

"Yes, I know. Poor little beasts," returning to the lemmings. "To think of remembering for more than eleven thousand years! Tiny, tiny brains to nourish faith so long. Because their ancestors made annual migrations, like the wild geese and the ducks and the ill-fated passenger pigeons, they still try it once in a hundred years.' If only they knew that it is only once in a thousand!"

"It puts our own faith to shame," the girl said.

"And yet inherited memories are probably more common than we think. Ours are entire, but consider the broken ones. And there are so many! One man may be lucky enough to be born with the genius of a great poet of centuries ago, and gain much fame thereby. Another gets enough to put him in a madhouse—dreaming that he is King Solomon or Napoleon Bonaparte. Oh, I speak feelingly on the subject! I raved of my Atlantean memories so much in that French hospital back in 1918 that they thought I was mad. If I had not been lucky in my connections, and known to be greatly interested in ancient civilizations, I should be in a straitjacket now, I dare say. As for those other poor chaps—" He made a quick gesture with his uninjured hand. "Well, we are lucky. Let us be thankful."

He fell into a brooding silence. O'Farrell had no wish to break it. Nor did he dare to ask where they were going; doubtless he was expected to know.

They paced slowly down the street. A great arch presently confronted them. The elephants passed through into a narrow, shadowy enclosure, began the descent of an ever winding, ever darkening road. It must lead to a temple. O'Farrell surmised. All the old races had worshipped in caves, he knew, as witness the Cretan labyrinth. He hoped, with an inward shudder, that there would be no sacrifices.

They went a long way. Where the light came from he could not tell,

but though they must have penetrated deeply into the earth, the darkness never became complete. Always they could see the elephant ahead of them, the howdah swaying, ghost-like, on its back, till suddenly it knelt, then lurched to its feet again, then disappeared.

Their own elephant knelt. Shadowy forms helped them to alight, lowered voices bade them follow. So they climbed a high stairway of broad, shallow steps, fairly well lighted though they could not tell from what source, to a narrow doorway. Still following their conductors, they went through.

They came out into an enormous balcony, set with tables and benches. Other balconies were above this, still others beneath, sweeping in immense circles above the huge arena below.

The central feature of this arena was a high altar smoking with incense. Its white marble sides were painted with beautifully executed designs—the swastika; the Cretan double axe; Atlas with the sky on his shoulders; a winged horse, soaring; Medusa's head; the lemmings; Poseidon riding a storm at sea; the bucranium—the head of the sacrificial bull—with fillets; the minotaur.

Above it all arched a dome of the color of a summer sky at midnight. The sweeping zodiac with its twelve signs, the twelve planets which the Atlanteans, and—later—the Aztecs had known, blazed in this artificial heaven, giving light.

The girl Diana touched his arm drew his attention from the unparalleled grandeur of that gorgeous ceiling to his more immediate surroundings. He followed her and the Englishman to one of the tables and sat down. He saw that the balcony was filled, though not over-crowded. Filled too were such portions of the other balconies as he could see. All about him was a hushed murmur of conversation.

Boys and girls came in presently, bearing trays of food and wine which they placed upon the tables. These young people, O'Farrell decided, were neither slaves nor servants. They had all the air of hosts looking after the comfort of honored guests. Indeed, he realized suddenly that he had not yet seen anyone who seemed to be a servitor, nor any officials other than the priests. And he found the food, the drinks, though utterly unfamiliar to him, to be extraordinarily good.

Into the arena below filed the chorus which had welcomed them on the beach. Their musicians were with them—with harps of various shapes, though none too large to carry, pipes, small horns, odd-shaped lutes, a drum. A vast wave of melody rolled up to the silent people.

Dancers swept in, a medley, unearthly, beautiful yet somehow terrible,

an awful unmasking of the ancient pageantry of the new-made Earth. Goat-shepherd Pan with his fauns and satyrs, who hunted animals and dressed like them. A god-like, golden Prometheus, who brought down a flaming torch from the sky. The first horse-tamers, the centaurs. Nymphs and dryads decked with leaves, and with flowers in their hair. Warriors in helmets and armor. At last, the thinkers, priests of Atlantis in their yellow robes.

In turn they wove an intricate pattern of a myriad figures, fantastic yet weirdly beautiful. And suddenly O'Farrell began to understand. The music, the chanting, the dance, were all parts of a single symbolism, the age-old history of Atlantis was being enacted before him.

There was shown the slow, measured development of a primitive people, the constant outflow of the more restless to neighboring lands of the north, south, east and west; recurring earthquakes and human as well as animal sacrifices to placate the gods; invasion by an alien people and exile of many of the original race; finally the great ocean wave which broke up and almost destroyed the kingdom.

O'Farrell had sat spellbound. He had forgotten himself, his predicament, his danger; it was as if the panorama of thirty thousand years had been unrolled before him.

But now the scene changed. Dancers, chorus and music-makers drew aside, became a background for the procession which now entered the arena. These were the older priests in their lavishly embroidered, yellow robes and mitred head-gear, bearing scepter-like wands of gold; the high priest, who had exchanged his caduceus for a golden double-axe; half-naked youths, each of whom led in a filleted, snow-white bull; young girls in long, white robes and chaplets of white flowers.

"The sacrifice!" O'Farrell exclaimed under his breath, and felt the blood curdle around his heart.

"Oh, no," the Englishman whispered. "Watch!"

And the girl Diana gave him another look of warning and entreaty.

And then O'Farrell saw enacted, down there in that huge arena, a thing quite new and modern and yet as old as the oldest ritual of the ancient cult of the bull. One by one the beautiful long-horned bulls were released. One by one the young men leaped at them, seized their polished horns, and, in spite of the bulls frantic struggles, pinned them to the earth. Each bull received a mock blow from the golden double-axe in the high priest's hand, was led away.

Then the young priestesses marched in a demure procession around the altar, and threw incense by handfuls upon the smoking fire, chanting

their vows meanwhile to serve Atlantis altar-fires for a year-long term of chastity and prayer.

O'Farrell drew a deep breath of relief. No bloodshed there! But the original ceremony from which this one was directly descended—ah, that, certainly, had literally run with blood!

The high priest raised his hand. "Children of the sun and of Atlantis," he cried. "You know why we are gathered here. You know that when the gods were wroth with us, when the earth split and the waters rose and the heavens poured fire upon us, even then the more merciful of our gods raised up leaders among us to save the remnants of our people and our land. They—these merciful ones—taught us how to set our broken isles adrift, how to bring them together, how to separate them again. They taught us how to control the mists of the air and the currents of the sea, how to remain for ever invisible to our enemies. And last, because they knew that every race must have new blood in order to survive, they taught us how to summon our own from the outside world once in a thousand years!"

A very old man, that high priest. He took a step forward now, and lifted his arms high.

"We welcome you as our own, those of you who have come today from the far-flung parts of Earth. Ours is a happy land where every man works, and every man plays, and every man rests, eats, sleeps according to his need, and every woman the same. Forget, then, violence, injustice, ugliness, the cold of frost, the burning heat of the sun. There are none of those things here.

"And you know, too, you who are descended from Atlas and Poseidon, that the little ones, the lemmings, they who once gnawed loose the bonds of Poseidon's sea horses and set them free, made pilgrimages to our old land each year in the long ago. But when Poseidon in his anger at our disobedience and iniquities had overwhelmed the land which stood between, they could no longer reach us. Yet they tried, at certain times, and were swallowed up and lost."

His voice, which had sunk to a mournful cadence, suddenly ceased. He spread his hands. And, as if by magic, out from behind the smoking altar scampered the lemmings, chattering, running this way and that.

Applause burst from the people, wild, deafening, and lasting long. But at last the high priest raised his hand, and silence fell. His voice came again, triumphant now.

"These did not die! The mighty Poseidon sent them to us, a sign of his favor, of his forgiveness of his promise to preserve us—for another

thousand years! And he chose as his instruments a youth and a maiden who came together. Let them, therefore, descend and stand before me, that all Atlantis may behold and honor those whom our father Poseidon has pointed out as his most favored children."

Dazed and thunderstruck, O'Farrell felt the girl Diana's hand take his. It was as cold as ice, but she did not speak. Together they threaded their way among the tables, down the stair, along a shadowy passage, through a door. At last they were in the center of the arena, a hand of the high priest rested on each head.

"All Atlantis thanks you" the old man finished simply.

"Ah, it was nothing to be thanked for," Diana said, a catch in her voice. "It was a duty an obligation, and a pleasure beyond all telling. We *loved* to do it."

"And," O'Farrell added, feeling it incumbent upon him to say something and not knowing what to say, "we hope, now that they are here, that they will grow in numbers year by year, so you will never be without them again."

And then it seemed to him that the atmosphere was charged with something dreadful, as if the sky had cracked, or the earth opened, or the sea forsook its bed. Silence. Like the dead weight of nightmare, like the awful certainty of death.

At last the high priest's voice came in a strangled whisper—a whisper that yet seemed to reverberate to the remotest corner under that blazing dome.

"*Who are you?*" he demanded. "How did you come here if you do not know—is it indeed possible you do not remember?—that the lemmings like the wild geese and the salmon and so many other creatures, must go north in the spring to breed?"

And then O'Farrell knew that he was done.

"Deceit, imposture, falsehood," came the inexorable voice of the high priest. "These things have always borne the brand of treason, and treason is punishable by death." His voice rose to a lamentable cry. "I am accursed that the duty has devolved upon me to condemn a man to death!"

"No!" the girl cried in a desperate voice. "No! He had no intention to deceive. It was I who made him do that. I did not know—my memories were too old to tell me—that now you worship only the more merciful of the Atlantean gods. My ancestor went with Quetzalcoatl to America. And at that time Atlantean worship was a cruel and bloody thing!"

"How did he come?"

"By accident only. The current caught him—him and the lemmings. He could not help but come. And he shall not die! I appeal to the people!" Her voice rose to a scream. "He shall not die!"

"He shall not die!" It was the Englishman. He was standing, his right arm thrown upward, palm out, in the universal gesture of friendship, peace.

And "He shall not die!" came in shouts from this section and that as the newcomers leaped to their feet. O'Farrell could distinguish them by their dress, but not for long. For in a moment they were hidden by the up-surging multitude.

"He shall not die!" shouted Atlantis with one voice. "He brought us the lemmings! He shall not die!"

"The lemmings, and good fortune with them for a thousand years," the girl Diana cried. "The people have spoken. He shall go in peace."

"The people have spoken," assented the high priest. "There shall be no blood on my hands tonight. Shall he remain or shall he depart? It is for him to choose."

But O'Farrell stood still, too overwhelmed with bewilderment and uncertainty to speak. The shocks had been too many and too close together; he was at that moment incapable of choice.

The girl looked at him, long and hard. A queer little smile rested on her lips for a moment. She made a slight, despairing movement with her hands. At last she spoke. "He would never be happy with us. Let him go."

They put him in her boat, O'Farrell said. It was night then, but the sky was clear and the moon and the stars hung low. They brought him food and presents of all sorts, and said many kind things to him. They didn't want him to go; that was plain. But he was still too numbed to combat the girl's decision—she had guided him, so long. He let her guide him now. So—he went.

For a little while he could see the land behind him. But presently it seemed to break up, to be floating in fragments of beauty on the bosom of the sea, at last to be no more than a mist, a mirage, a dream of faery. . . .

"BUT," I DEMANDED THEN, INCREDULOUSLY, "why didn't you come home? You were gone three years or more. And this adventure, you say, took up hardly more than a week!"

"And at that I was luckier than the Portuguese who spent one night there and took a hundred years to get back home," O'Farrell answered,

with a strange smile. "But my further adventures were commonplace enough. The Atlanteans had done all they could for me, but they couldn't give me gasoline. So when the stock in the boat gave out, which was soon, I drifted. A tramp picked me up, a privately owned trading-vessel with no wireless. She was bound for the South Pacific, and I had to go, willy-nilly—around the Horn—stopping to trade first one place and another—till we came to the very jumping-off place of the world, it seemed to me. And that was a plague-stricken place—typhus, the mate said it was. He and two sailors and I were left there. We were on shore when the captain found out about the epidemic, and he simply lifted anchor and left us—in a blue funk, I suppose.

"But it's plain he spread the news of the sickness, for there wasn't a boat that came near us for—well, something like two years, I imagine. You lose track of time out there—and," wearily, "you have lots of time to think."

"Well?" I said, for I knew there must be something more.

"Oh, I came home. But I had proof while I was there that I hadn't dreamed about—Atlantis. It was true. For that shot in the arm the priest gave me did what he said it would. At least two-thirds of the natives died of that plague. The mate and the two sailors died—horribly. But I stayed right with them and did all I could for them and wasn't sick

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a day. That's proof, I think. And it's quite likely that I'll live to be a hundred or more—just as that Portuguese did—whether I want to or not."

"And now you wish you had stayed when you had the chance, or that you could go back?"

I don't know why, but I was quite certain of his answer before he spoke.

"Oh, yes." He sat still a long time, twisting his pipe between his fingers. "I want to go back. But I can't. The current won't flow again for another thousand years. I was a fool, a poor, blind fool. It's hell, you know, just plain hell . . ." His head drooped forward a little, hopelessly. "It's hell to love a woman—and not have sense enough to find it out—till after you have lost her—for ever."

And after a while he repeated in a voice of indescribable weariness and bitterness:

"Perhaps, long since, there was a land beyond,
Westward from death, some city, some calm place,
Where one could taste God's quiet and be fond
With the little beauty of a human face;

"But now the land is drowned, yet still we press
Westward, in search, to death, to nothingness."



decoration by Hugh Rankin

The Eye Of Horus

by Steffan B. Alletti

(author of *The Castle in the Window*)

While the final results are not yet in, the early returns from you, the active readers, indicate that STEFFAN B. ALLETTI's first published story has been very well received; and even a flood of disapproval now (which we do not expect to receive) cannot cancel the "out-standing", "first place", and "second place" votes he has already collected. Meanwhile, we offer the story below as evidence that the first was not just a flash in the pan.

THIS MANUSCRIPT IS HERE PRESENTED by me in its original form, as handed to me on an incredibly hot June day by George Warren, an amateur Egyptologist from New York. My name is Michael Kearton; I am an importer of dyes and was staying in a town named Wadi Hadalfa for business purposes. It is the last stop before the train tracks cross through the terrible Nubian desert to Abu Hamed.

Warren had just returned from an expedition to a spot several miles outside of Akasha, a smaller town about seventy-five miles away. He was in a state of shock and fever, and was badly cut and bruised; but in the week and a half left to him, he typed the following report and gave me the carbon for safekeeping. It is well he did so, as the original unaccountably disappeared with his death. As I barely knew the man, I will not make any statements as to my opinion of his mental condition at the time directly before his death; all I will say is that whatever had happened in the heat of the Nubian desert had been terrible, for his physical condition was very bad. Yet, to me, he seemed lucid. At any rate, the reader must form his own conclusions from the manuscript.

M. K.

"I HAVE RISEN, I have risen like the mighty hawk (of gold) that cometh forth from his egg; I fly and I alight like the hawk which hath a back of four cubits width, and the wings which are like unto the mother-of-emerald of the South."

So begins the chapter of performing the transformation into a Hawk of Gold, from the great Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.

"O grant thou (speaking to Osiris) that I may be feared, and make thou me to be a terror."

These words—I first read them when I was a boy—have now taken on a new and immensely terrifying dimension, a dimension that stretches back in time and touches the most archaic fear of men—the fear of death, and the resulting need for gods. Man still dies, but his gods live on endlessly—I know that now. Some day we will discover Isis and Osiris, Ptah and Anubis, Ishtar, Chemosh, and even Zeus and Jupiter. They are all waiting.

I don't know precisely where to begin this narrative, but should it turn out to be the only record of this whole affair, I shall start at the beginning.

Suffice it to say that I arrived in Cairo five years ago, an amateur Egyptologist who, by fortune or fate, had come into an immense sum of money at the age of thirty.

By offering money, I immediately became attached to the Cairo Museum expedition to the lower portion of Nubia. There it became obvious that the only reason I was along was that I financed the business, and therefore had a right to go along—but only as an observer. Though I became a friend of Mustafa, the native foreman of the diggers, the staff was no more than coldly polite to me, and my prying into their affairs was regarded with scorn.

Nevertheless I stayed with the museum expeditions and staff for three digging seasons, and got none of the credit for having been in on the discoveries of numerous early and predynastic grave sites.

Sick of being the silent partner with the money, I withdrew my support and went to Nubia on my own, accompanied by Mustafa, who was now too old for the museum's liking.

Thus we arrived at Aswan. Once there, I found that my fame (that is, my reputation for having a lot of money) preceded me, and shortly I became acquainted with William Kirk and Andrij Kalatis.

Kirk is a British Egyptologist, now a very old man, and generally rather drunk. Among his papers and papyri he found several bills of sale dealing with shipments of grain for the priests to the Temple of

Horus, the Falcon God. One papyrus also gives explicit directions on the whereabouts of the temple, and, to my surprise, it was close to a city of which a few ruins still remain, about ten miles outside of a town called Akasha, not far from Aswan.

Kalatis, a young Greek soldier of fortune, proposed to accompany me on an expedition, financed by me, to find the temple.

After checking on Kirk's background and reputation and, after seeing the papyrus (it was undeniably authentic), I decided to give the business a try. Success would bring me worldwide fame and recognition as an Egyptologist. I did not particularly trust Kalatis, but I can take care of myself, and Mustafa would be along as foreman of the diggings. At any rate, I did not anticipate trouble from Kalatis unless we found something valuable enough to steal rather than give to the Egyptian government.

The first digging season was spent partly in research and partly in the digging of long rows of trenches in the chosen area. Kirk was too old to come, but Kalatis, much to my surprise, proved an admirable companion and a good worker despite his disappointment at finding no great treasure.

The second season went essentially the same way until one day early this month, when Mustafa came running to our tent to announce that he had found the top of what seemed to be a flight of steps. By that afternoon we had uncovered seven stone steps, and a small, narrow door.

II

The seal was unbroken! Kalatis and I looked at each other in astonishment. An unopened tomb meant for me an unparalleled archaeological find, and for Kalatis it could mean the wealth that he so continually dreamed of.

I took the chisel, and, there, in the midday heat of Nubia, in a few moments I broke a seal that had remained perfectly intact since its placement there thousands of years earlier.

Curiously enough, once inside the foetid darkness, there was only an empty chamber less than five feet long, and only about three feet wide. At the end of the room was another very narrow stone stairway.

Our porters and diggers, of course, were too superstitious to enter with us, so, leaving Mustafa to keep an eye on them (these were not the trained museum expedition diggers), Kalatis and I had no recourse but to climb down alone. We were both slightly unnerved, being amateurs,

and not a little worried about the condition in which the tomb might be after so many centuries. Also, as the tomb was unopened, there might still be some unsprung grave robber trap awaiting us.

We began down the stairs slowly and cautiously, training both our lights directly ahead of us. The air was terribly hot and dusty, so much so that we had to hold our handkerchiefs over our mouths to keep from gagging.

Descending in this manner, we reached the bottom after about fifteen minutes. The heat was now so stifling that we both had to lie down and relax, at the same time mopping ourselves off, for we had been perspiring heavily.

The room we were now in was a large chamber with boxes piled up to a height of seven feet or so along the walls. As soon as this was noted, Kalatis went over to inspect them. I told him to be careful, since the boxes were sure to rot away at his touch, but his inspection proved them not to be of wooden gilt as I had imagined, but of gold! Here were perhaps a hundred large boxes, all of gold inlaid with lapis-lazuli and coral, done in an astonishingly sophisticated manner. Kalatis grabbed a box off the top of one of the piles and placed it, with much difficulty, on the floor. We bent over it, and, while I was looking for a seal or lock to open, Kalatis in his haste simply chiseled it open. I was rather angry at him, because archaeology is never served by people who go about breaking things in order to save a few moments.

Once open, the box revealed an exquisitely carved effigy of Horus, the Falcon God, the Avenger, Son of Isis and Osiris. It was about a foot and a half long, and, at its widest part about the shoulders, it was seven inches or so wide. Its grace, fluidity of line, and, if I may say, degenerate quality, dated it at being quite late in Egyptian history, possibly even as late as the Roman occupation. The figure was hollow, and, I imagine, contained the mummified body of a falcon, the sacred bird of Horus.

Kalatis, of course, was overwhelmed by the incredible amount of treasure that we had before us; from a monetary point of view it was the greatest archaeological find in history. He began to leap about, dancing, and shouting in Greek of his good fortune. For some reason, exactly what I cannot say, his gamboling about the place frightened me. I still had seen no evidence of its being a tomb—it could easily have been a storeroom or treasure room for the great temple—and yet, unaccountably, I felt the presence of something, something very

remote in time, and bizarre beyond imagination, something very close to us, watching.

Then, in the beam of my flashlight, I caught a vague movement; there was something stirring on top of one of the piles of chests. I shouted this intelligence to Kalatis, who instantly sobered up and set his own beam atop the same pile. For a moment we saw nothing, then, over the rim of the box, as we drew closer, we saw a form and two positively blazing red dots staring at us. It was a bird—not a bat—a bird, and a large one from its silhouette!

When we got within about five feet, the thing took off and, with a terrible squawking, began to bang itself about the walls and boxes in the manner of birds who are trying to escape from an enclosure. Presently, with a flapping of its wings, it settled back on top of another pile of boxes and rested, glaring at us.

By this time, I was so unnerved that I was all for climbing back up the stairway and out into the fresh air. We were covered with dust, dirt and plaster dislodged by the bird's wild flight. Actually, a trained archaeologist would have immediately gone above to get cataloguing equipment, wires for stringing electric lights, brushes, and cloths for the handling and cleaning of the ancient trove. How much I wish I had done this straightaway.

In spite of my protests, Kalatis wanted to inspect the entire room before going back. It was, rather, a long corridor of sorts, since it stretched on for what must have been about fifty feet, narrowing visibly at its terminus. There, cut into the stone, was a small entrance. So, with the great treasure gleaming dully in the dim light behind us, we entered the third chamber. The room was again large and narrow, and, in the beam of the flashlight we saw the standing figure of a man with a hawk's head. There was something about the figure that startled us; it was certainly not unusual for statuary to be placed in tombs or sanctuaries, but there was a feeling pervading the entire chamber, a feeling that there was something alive, and that it was the statue.

I don't know whether Kalatis felt this or not; if he did, it certainly was an immense act of bravery to walk up to the figure. I personally feel that he was ignorant of the entire aura of terror that the place had about it. Perhaps, because my mind is attuned to Egyptology and his was not, he sensed nothing.

At any rate, whether Kalatis was aware of it or not, he went right up to the figure. As he drew closer, his light illuminated every detail of it. It was a representation of Horus, divine son of Isis and Osiris,

the Avenger of his father's murder, and whose great eye lights the world by day, and calms it by night. The figure stood erect, in the typical Egyptian pose of walking, with one foot slightly ahead of the other. The fists were clenched, and under the great double crown of Egypt, the large round eyes were closed.

At this time I still had no direct evidence that my fears were anything more than imagined, but suddenly, to my unspeakable horror, the figure snapped open its eyes and fixed them on Kalatis! I screamed, for in that fatal gloom, those bird eyes shone with such malevolent red brightness, that I knew we would never take the treasure out into the light.

Kalatis stopped instantly, drew his pistol, and raised it. For what seemed like hours, the two stood glaring at each other. Then, slowly, the figure of Horus began to move, the dust of centuries flaking off and falling to its feet in gray white clouds. Kalatis remained still for a few moments, then cocked his pistol and fired it. The first shot slammed audibly into the figure's body, but aside from throwing up a huge volume of dust, there was no visible effect on the thing. Then, in very rapid sequence, Kalatis emptied the gun, each shot answered by a thump and more dust.

By this time, the creature was less than a yard away from us. Neither Kalatis nor I could move; we were absolutely paralyzed. Then, with a sudden lunge, the hawk leapt to where Kalatis was standing, and grabbed him. Kalatis' resulting scream was quite sufficient to snap me out of my stupor, and allow me to once again move my legs. I pulled out my gun and, manoeuvring to the side of the thing, put a well-aimed bullet directly into the side of its head. There was more dust, and some feathers this time, and the creature relaxed his grip on Kalatis—who by now was either dead or fainting, for he dropped to the floor—and looked fiercely at me. I immediately turned and ran down the long corridor piled high with the boxes of treasure.

To my immense terror, I was now pursued by birds—the whole corridor was full of them, large birds with great burning eyes and sharp beaks, tearing at my clothes and flesh. These birds were falcons.

In spite of their hindrance, I made it through the corridor, and up the treacherously narrow stairway. I am forever astonished by the ability of the human body to cope with, shall we say, unique and taxing situations. My mind, frozen with horror, was now almost dormant, and my body alone and without mental command, carried me on. Fortunately, the stairway was too narrow to admit many birds and me at the same time, so they became less of a threat to my life now, and, by this time,

I was so numb with pain and terror, that I could barely feel their clawing anyway. Every so often I would trip and fall on my knees and elbows—the stairs were irregularly hewn—and the pecking of the birds served to prod me to my feet again.

I don't know how long it took me to get up the stairway; I couldn't even make a guess.

When I got to the antechamber described earlier, I fell to the ground and, it being such a small chamber, crawled the rest of the way into the weakening sunlight. As I crawled over onto the sand, I realized I had absolutely no strength left. I expected to be pecked to pieces, but the birds behind me flew out of the tomb and perched on its lintel. They sat and watched me, but flew at me no more.

The diggers had taken fright and could not be restrained from leaving, so Mustafa was all that was left of our company. He ran up to me, much alarmed at my appearance—when later given a mirror, I too was shocked; my face was (and is, still), a complete mess of bruises and long jagged rips from the birds' beaks. It was a miracle that my eyes were not touched. The rest of my body was also in terrible shape, and my clothes had just about been ripped off by those fiendish claws.

I collapsed, and, had it not been for the constant ministrations of Mustafa, I should surely have perished on the trip back.

Once we arrived at Wadi Hadalia by Nile boat, it was an easy operation to get the train back to our base at Aswan.

It is now less than two weeks after that terrible day twenty miles out of Akasha, and now even this short time has begun to cloud my memory of the affair. Mustafa believes me, but he is little more than a superstitious old Bedouin who has been brought up on legends and tales of horror. Kirk and several Englishmen staying here think that I am lying or raving. I have no means of proving the story other than going back—which I will not, except that Kalatis is gone, and I am still recovering from my wounds.

I wired my agent in New York to stand by with ready funds; by this evening I shall be on the train to Cairo, and to the museum (to which I should have gone in the first place). Once there I shall convince them of the truth of the whole affair, and of the importance of my discovery. In the *Book of the Dead* there is the means of placating the Great Hawk through spells—you can fight the supernatural only with the supernatural. And when Horus is at rest, we can go back, and my find will be catalogued and published, and my name shall go to the head of the list of great Egyptologists.

Should something happen to me, I have made a carbon of this, and am giving it to one of the English businessmen here; I am giving it to Kearton because he is the least interested in the affair, and the least likely to have formed any theories of his own about it.

George Warren

THE CARBON IS SIGNED by George Warren. It was indeed a good thing that he gave me the above testimony. He never got to the train, and the original report was never found.

Just when the train was to have left, his body was discovered in his room. No cause of death could be found; he was just lying face down on his bed, with his hands, curiously enough, clasped at the back of his neck. The room—which was a mess—was literally covered with feathers.

Michael Kearton



The Spectre of the Brocken

FROM earliest times the Brocken, the loftiest peak of the Hartz Mountains, in middle Europe, has been a commonly accredited seat of the marvelous. On its summits are still seen huge blocks of granite called the Sorcerer's Chair and the Altar, while not far away is a spring of pure water called the Magic Fountain—names supposed to have originated in the rites of the great idol Cortho, whom the Saxons worshipped in secret on the summit of the Brocken while Christianity was being extended over the adjacent plains.

Many times has one of the mountain's phenomena, the Spectre of the Brocken, been seen by observers, and not long ago a M. Gabrielle saw it after having deliberately sought it out for some time. On the morning of his success the sun rose about four o'clock through a serene atmosphere. In the southwest a brisk wind carried before it a transparent mist, which had not yet been condensed into thick, heavy clouds.

About a quarter past four M. Gabrielle went to a nearby inn, and, looking around, to take note of the visibility to the west, he observed at a very great distance a

human figure of monstrous size. As he stared at it his hat was tugged by a violent gust of wind, and on raising his hand to his head, to hold down the hat, he saw the colossal figure make the same motion.

He immediately made another movement by bending his body—an action which the spectral figure also repeated. He was anxious to make further experiments, but the figure disappeared. He remained, however, in the same position, hoping it would return, and in a few minutes it again made its appearance and mocked his gestures as before. He then called the landlord of the inn; both took the position he had at first been in; and two colossal figures appeared over the eminence. After a few more minutes, during which they bent their bodies and otherwise continued to imitate the gestures of the two spectators, the figures disappeared, this time for good.

But M. Gabrielle had seen that the Spectre of the Brocken was not a supernatural phenomenon. It was merely the shadow of the observer projected from the rising sun behind on the grey cloud curtain far out over the plains in front.

Four Prose-Poems

by H. P. Lovecraft

(author of *The Dreams in the Witch-House*)

If proof is still needed that gentle but continued pressure on an editor can sometimes bring about the results requested, you have it here. For a long time, I have been receiving letters from *Manuel B. Tarrish* urging that we use various stories (all of them intelligent selections, and several already on my list); eventually, he dropped in to see me, and pleaded for *Ex Oblivione* averring that it had been out of print for a long time, and did not appear in the recent reprinting of all of HPL's fiction by Arkham House. While you will prefer one section to another, of course, it seems to make the most sense to vote upon the four prose-poems as a group, and they are listed as one unit on the preference page, as they are on the contents page.

1. MEMORY

IN THE VALLEY OF NIS the accursed waning moon shines thinly, tearing a path for its light with feeble horns through the lethal foliage of a great upas-tree. And within the depths of the valley, where the light reaches not, move forms not meant to be beheld. Rank is the herbage on each slope, where evil vines and creeping plants crawl amidst the stones of ruined palaces, twining tightly about broken columns and strange monoliths, and heaving up marble pavements laid by forgotten hands. And in trees that grow gigantic in crumbling courtyards leap little

(From *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*: copyright 1943 by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei; by permission of Arkham House.)

apes, while in and out of deep treasure-vaults writhe poison serpents and scaly things without a name.

Vast are the stones which sleep beneath coverlets of dank moss, and mighty were the walls from which they fell. For all time did their builders erect them, and in sooth they yet serve nobly, for beneath them the grey toad makes his habitation.

At the very bottom of the valley lies the river Than, whose waters are slimy and filled with weeds. From hidden springs it rises, and to subterranean grottoes it flows, so that the Daemon of the Valley knows not why its waters are red, nor whither they are bound.

The Genie that haunts the moonbeams spake to the Daemon of the Valley, saying "I am old, and forget much. Tell me the deeds and aspect and name of them who built these things of Stone." And the Daemon replied, "I am Memory, and am wise in lore of the past, but I too am old. These beings were like the waters of the river Than, not to be understood. Their deeds I recall not, for they were but of the moment. Their aspect I recall dimly, it was like to that of the little apes in the trees. Their name I recall clearly, for it rhymed with that of the river. These beings of yesterday were called Man."

So the Genie flew back to the thin horned moon, and the Daemon looked intently at a little ape in a tree that grew in a crumbling courtyard.

2. WHAT THE MOON BRINGS

I HATE THE MOON—I am afraid of it—for when it shines on certain scenes familiar and loved it sometimes makes them unfamiliar and hideous.

It was in the spectral summer when the moon shone down on the old garden where I wandered; the spectral summer of narcotic flowers and humid seas of foliage that bring wild and many-colored dreams. And as I walked by the shallow crystal stream I saw unwonted ripples tipped with yellow light, as if those placid waters were drawn on in resistless currents to strange oceans that are not in the world. Silent and sparkling, bright and baleful, those moon-cursed waters hurried I knew not whither; whilst from the embowered banks white lotos-blossoms fluttered one by one in the opiate night-wind and dropped despairingly into the stream, swirling away horribly under the arched, carven bridge, and staring back with the sinister resignation of calm, dead faces.

And as I ran along the shore, crushing sleeping flowers with heedless feet and maddened ever by the fear of unknown things and the lure of the dead faces, I saw that the garden had no end under that moon; for where by day the walls were, there stretched now only new vistas of trees and paths, flowers and shrubs, stone idols and pagodas, and bendings of the yellow-litten stream past grassy banks and under grotesque bridges of marble. And the lips of the dead lotos-faces whispered sadly, and bade me follow, nor did I cease my steps till the stream became a river, and joined amidst marshes of swaying reeds and beaches of gleaming sand the shore of a vast and nameless sea.

Upon that sea the hateful moon shone, and over its unvoiced waves weird perfumes bred. And as I saw therein the lotos-faces vanish, I longed for nets that I might capture them and learn from them the secrets which the moon had brought upon the night. But when that moon went over to the west and the still tide ebbed from the sullen shore, I saw in that light old spires that the waves almost uncovered, and white columns gay with festoons of green seaweed. And knowing that to this sunken place all the dead had come, I trembled and did not wish again to speak with the lotos-faces.

Yet when I saw afar out in the sea a black condor descend from the sky to seek rest on a vast reef, I would fain have questioned him, and asked him of those whom I had known when they were alive. This I would have asked him had he not been so far away, but he was very far, and could not be seen at all when he drew nigh that gigantic reef.

So I watched the tide go out under that sinking moon, and saw gleaming the spires, the towers, and the roofs of that dead, dripping city. And as I watched, my nostrils tried to close against the perfume-conquering stench of the world's dead; for truly, in this unplaced and forgotten spot had all the flesh of the churchyards gathered for puffy sea-worms to gnaw and glut upon.

Over these horrors the evil moon now hung very low, but the puffy worms of the sea need no moon to feed by. And as I watched the ripples that told of the writhing of worms beneath, I felt a new chill from afar out whither the condor had flown, as if my flesh had caught a horror before my eyes had seen it.

Nor had my flesh trembled without cause, for when I raised my eyes I saw that the waters had ebbed very low, showing much of the vast reef whose rim I had seen before. And when I saw that the reef was but the black basalt crown of a shocking eikon whose monstrous forehead now shown in the dim moonlight and whose vile hooves must paw the

hellish ooze miles below, I shrieked and shrieked lest the hidden face rise above the waters, and lest the hidden eyes look at me after the slinking away of that leering and treacherous yellow moon.

And to escape this relentless thing I plunged gladly and unhesitatingly into the stinking shallows where amidst weedy walls and sunken streets fat sea-worms feast upon the world's dead.

3. NYARLATHOTEP

NYARLATHOTEP . . . THE CRAWLING CHAOS . . . I am the last . . . I will tell the audient void . . .

I do not recall distinctly when it began, but it was months ago. The general tension was horrible. To a season of political and social upheaval was added a strange and brooding apprehension of hideous physical danger; a danger widespread and all-embracing, such a danger as may be imagined only in the most terrible phantasms of the night. I recall that the people went about with pale and worried faces, and whispered warnings and prophecies which no one dared consciously repeat or acknowledge to himself that he had heard. A sense of monstrous guilt was upon the land, and out of the abysses between the stars swept chill currents that made men shiver in dark and lonely places. There was a demoniac alteration in the sequence of the seasons—the autumn heat lingered fearsomely, and everyone felt that the world and perhaps the universe had passed from the control of known gods or forces to that of gods or forces which were unknown.

And it was then that Nyarlathotep came out of Egypt. Who he was, none could tell, but he was of the old native blood and looked like a Pharaoh. The fellahin knelt when they saw him, yet could not say why. He said he had risen up out of the blackness of twenty-seven centuries, and that he had heard messages from places not on this planet. Into the lands of civilization came Nyarlathotep, swarthy, slender, and sinister, always buying strange instruments of glass and metal and combining them into instruments yet stranger. He spoke much of the sciences—of electricity and psychology and gave exhibitions of power which sent his spectators away speechless, yet which swelled his fame to exceeding magnitude. Men advised one another to see Nyarlathotep, and shuddered. And where Nyarlathotep went, rest vanished, for the small hours were rent with the screams of nightmare. Never before had the screams of nightmare been such a public problem; now the wise men almost wished

they could forbid sleep in the small hours, that the shrieks of cities might less horribly disturb the pale, pitying moon as it glimmered on green waters gliding under bridges, and old steeples crumbling against a sickly sky.

I remember when Nyarlathotep came to my city—the great, the old, the terrible city of unnumbered crimes. My friend had told me of him, and of the impelling fascination and allurements of his revelations, and I burned with eagerness to explore his uttermost mysteries. My friend said they were horrible and impressive beyond my most fevered imaginings; that what was thrown on a screen in the darkened room prophesied things none but Nyarlathotep dared prophesy, and in the sputter of his sparks there was taken from men that which had never been taken before yet which showed only in the eyes. And I heard it hinted abroad that those who knew Nyarlathotep looked on sights which others saw not.

It was in the hot autumn that I went through the night with the restless crowds to see Nyarlathotep; through the stifling night and up the endless stairs into the choking room. And shadowed on a screen, I saw hooded forms amidst ruins, and yellow evil faces peering from behind fallen monuments. And I saw the world battling against blackness; against the waves of destruction from ultimate space; whirling, churning, struggling around the dimming, cooling sun. Then the sparks played amazingly around the heads of the spectators, and hair stood up on end whilst shadows more grotesque than I can tell came out and squatted on the heads. And when I, who was colder and more scientific than the rest, mumbled a trembling protest about "imposture" and "static electricity," Nyarlathotep drove us all out, down the dizzy stairs into the damp, hot, deserted midnight streets. I screamed aloud that I was *not* afraid; that I never could be afraid; and others screamed with me for solace. We swore to one another that the city *was* exactly the same, and still alive; and when the electric lights began to fade we cursed the company over and over again, and laughed at the queer faces we made.

I believe we felt something coming down from the greenish moon, for when we began to depend on its light we drifted into curious involuntary marching formations and seemed to know our destinations though we dared not think of them. Once we looked at the pavement and found the blocks loose and displaced by grass, with scarce a line of rusted metal to show where the tramways had run. And again we saw a tram-car, lone, windowless, dilapidated, and almost on its side. When we gazed around the horizon, we could not find the third tower by the river, and noticed that the silhouette of the second tower was ragged at the top.

Then we split up into narrow columns, each of which seemed drawn in a different direction. One disappeared in a narrow alley to the left, leaving only the echo of a shocking moan. Another filed down a weed-choked subway entrance, howling with a laughter that was mad. My own column was sucked toward the open country, and presently I felt a chill which was not of the hot autumn; for as we stalked out on the dark moor, we beheld around us the hellish moon-glitter of evil snows. Trackless, inexplicable snows, swept asunder in one direction only, where lay a gulf all the blacker for its glittering walls. The column seemed very thin indeed as it plodded dreamily into the gulf. I lingered behind, for the black rift in the green-litten snow was frightful, and I thought I had heard the reverberations of a disquieting wail as my companions vanished; but my power to linger was slight. As if beckoned by those who had gone before, I half-floated between the titanic snowdrifts, quivering and afraid, into the sightless vortex of the unimaginable.

Screamingly sentient, dumbly delirious, only the gods that were can tell. A sickened, sensitive shadow writhing in hands that are not hands, and whirled blindly past ghastly midnights of rotting creation, corpses of dead worlds with sores that were cities, charnel winds that brush the pallid stars and make them flicker low. Beyond the worlds vague ghosts of monstrous things; half-seen columns of unsanctified temples that rest on nameless rocks beneath space and reach up to dizzy vacua above the spheres of light and darkness. And through this revolting graveyard of the universe the muffled, maddening beating of drums, and thin, monotonous whine of blasphemous flutes from inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond Time; the detestable pounding and piping whereunto dance slowly, awkwardly, and absurdly the gigantic, tenebrous ultimate gods—the blind, voiceless, mindless gargoyles whose soul is Nyarlathotep.

4. EX OBLIVIONE

WHEN THE LAST DAYS WERE UPON ME, and the ugly trifles of existence began to drive me to madness like the small drops of water that torturers let fall ceaselessly upon one spot of their victim's body. I loved the irradiate refuge of sleep. In my dreams I found a little of the beauty I had vainly sought in life, and wandered through old gardens and enchanted woods.

Once when the wind was soft and scented I heard the south calling, and sailed endlessly and languorously under strange stars.

Once when the gentle rain fell I glided in a barge down a sunless stream under the earth till I reached another world of purple twilight, iridescent arbors, and undying roses.

And once I walked through a golden valley that led to shadowy groves and ruins, and ended in a mighty wall green with antique vines, and pierced by a little gate of bronze.

Many times I walked through that valley, and longer and longer would I pause in the spectral half-light where the giant trees squirmed and twisted grotesquely, and the gray ground stretched damply from trunk to trunk, sometimes disclosing the mold-stained stones of buried temples. And always the goal of my fancies was the mighty vine-grown wall with the little gate of bronze therein.

After a while, as the days of waking became less and less bearable from their greyness and sameness, I would often drift in opiate peace through the valley and the shadowy groves, and wonder how I might seize them for my eternal dwelling-place, so that I need no more crawl back to a dull world stript of interest and new colors. And as I looked upon the little gate in the mighty wall, I felt that beyond it lay a dream-country from which, once it was entered, there would be no return.

So each night in sleep I strove to find the hidden latch of the gate in the ivied antique wall, though it was exceedingly well hidden. And I would tell myself that the realm beyond the wall was not more lasting merely, but more lovely and radiant as well.

Then one night in the dream-city of Zakarion I found a yellowed papyrus filled with the thoughts of dream-sages who dwelt of old in that city, and who were too wise ever to be born in the waking world. Therein were written many things concerning the world of dream, and among them was lore of a golden valley and a sacred grove with temples, and a high wall pierced by a little bronze gate. When I saw this lore, I knew that it touched on the scenes I had haunted, and I therefore read long in the yellowed papyrus.

Some of the dream-sages wrote gorgeously of the wonders beyond the irrepassable gate, but others told of horror and disappointment. I knew not which to believe, yet longed more and more to cross for ever into the unknown land; for doubt and secrecy are the lure of lures, and no new horror can be more terrible than the daily torture of the commonplace. So when I learned of the drug which would unlock the gate and drive me through, I resolved to take it when next I awaked.

Last night I swallowed the drug and floated dreamily into the golden valley and the shadowy groves; and when I came this time to the antique

wall, I saw that the small gate of bronze was ajar. From beyond came a glow that weirdly lit the giant twisted trees and the tops of the buried temples, and I drifted on songfully, expectant of the glories of the land from whence I should never return.

But as the gate swung wider and the sorcery of the drug and dream pushed me through, I knew that all sights and glories were at an end; for in that new realm was neither land nor sea, but only the white void of unpeopled and illimitable space. So, happier than I had ever dared hope to be, I dissolved again into that native infinity of crystal oblivion from which the daemon Life had called me for one brief and desolate hour.

The Reckoning

Not a single story in our July issue failed to draw at least one "outstanding" vote—the 2nd and 3rd placers tied for the largest number of these; and they, too, are the only ones which avoided drawing a single "dislike" vote. Our new author, who finished in third place, gave veteran Algernon Blackwood a stiff race all the way through while Blackwood himself very nearly passed the winner in the home stretch. Anna Hunger ties with Rudyard Kipling in the precise number of "outstanding" and dislike votes received; Cahill's zeros and red marks cancelled each other out.

The finals: (1) *Worms of the Earth*, Robert E. Howard; (2) *A Psychical Invasion* (part two), Algernon Blackwood; (3) *The Castle in the Window*, Steffan B. Aletti; (4) *They Called Him Ghost*, Laurence J. Cahill; (5) *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*, Rudyard Kipling; (6) *Come*, Anna Hunger.

A Diagnosis Of Death

by Ambrose Bierce

(author of *The Death of Halpin Frayser, An Inhabitant of
Carcosa, etc.*)

From the collection entitled, *Can Such Things Be?*, this shows that the sceptical Bierce could handle the supernormal far more tellingly than many who claimed to believe in it.

"I AM NOT NOT so superstitious as some of your physicians — men of science, as you are pleased to be called," said Hawver, replying to an accusation that had not been made. "Some of you — only a few, I confess — believe in the immortality of the soul, and in apparitions which you have not the honesty to call ghosts. I go no further than a conviction that

the living are sometimes seen where they are not, but have been — where they have lived so long, perhaps so intensely, as to have left their impress on everything about them. I know, indeed, that one's environment may be so affected by one's personality as to yield, long afterward, an image of one's self to the eyes of another. Doubtless the impressing personality has to be the

right kind of personality as the perceiving eyes have to be the right kind of eyes — mine, for example."

"Yes, the right kind of eyes, conveying sensations to the wrong kind of brain," said Dr. Frayley, smiling.

"Thank you; one likes to have an expectation gratified; that is about the reply that I supposed you would have the civility to make."

"Pardon me. But you say that you know. That is a good deal to say, don't you think? Perhaps you will not mind the trouble of saying how you learned."

"You will call it an hallucination," Hawver said, "but that does not matter." And he told the story.

"Last summer I went, as you know, to pass the hot weather term in the town of Meridian. The relative at whose house I had intended to stay was ill, so I sought other quarters. After some difficulty I succeeded in renting a vacant dwelling that had been occupied by an eccentric doctor of the name of Mannering, who had gone away years before, no one knew where, not even his agent. He had built the house himself and had lived in it with an old servant for about ten years. His practice, never very extensive, had after a few years been given up entirely. Not only so, but he had withdrawn himself almost altogether from so-

cial life and become a recluse. I was told by the village doctor, about the only person with whom he held any relations, that during his retirement he had devoted himself to a single line of study, the result of which he had expounded in a book that did not commend itself to the approval of his professional brethren, who, indeed, considered him not entirely sane. I have not seen the book and cannot now recall the title of it, but I am told that it expounded a rather startling theory. He held that it was possible in the case of many a person in good health to forecast his death with precision, several months in advance of the event. The limit, I think, was eighteen months. There were local tales of his having exerted his powers of prognosis, or perhaps you would say diagnosis; and it was said that in every instance the person whose friends he had warned had died suddenly at the appointed time, and from no assignable cause. All this, however, has nothing to do with what I have to tell; I thought it might amuse a physician.

"The house was furnished, just as he had lived in it. It was a rather gloomy dwelling for one who was neither a recluse nor a student, and I think it gave something of its character to me — perhaps some of its former occupant's character; for always I felt in it a certain melancholy that was not in

my natural disposition, nor I think, due to loneliness. I had no servants that slept in the house, but I have always been, as you know, rather fond of my own society, being much addicted to reading though little to study. Whatever was the cause, the effect was dejection and a sense of impending evil; this was especially so in Dr. Mannering's study, although that room was the lightest and most airy in the house. The doctor's life-size portrait in oil hung in that room, and seemed completely to dominate it. There was nothing unusual in the picture; the man was evidently rather good looking, about fifty years old, with iron-gray hair, a smooth-shaven face and dark, serious eyes. Something in the picture always drew and held my attention. The man's appearance became familiar to me, and rather haunted me.

"One evening I was passing through this room to my bedroom, with a lamp—there is no gas in Meridian. I stopped as usual before the portrait, which seemed in the lamplight to have a new expression, not easily named, but distinctly uncanny. It interested but do not disturb me. I moved the lamp from one side to the other and observed the effects of the altered light. While so engaged I felt an impulse to turn round. As I did so I saw a man moving across the room directly toward me! As soon

as he came near enough for the lamplight to illuminate the face I saw that it was Dr. Mannering himself; it was as if the portrait were walking!

"I beg your pardon, I said, somewhat coldly, but if you knocked I did not hear.

"He passed me, within an arm's length, lifted his right forefinger, as if in warning, and without a word went on out of the room, though I observed his exit no more than I had observed his entrance.

"Of course, I need not tell you that this was what you will call an hallucination and I call an apparition. That room had only two doors, of which one was locked; the other led into a bedroom, from which there was no exit. My feeling on realizing this is not an important part of the incident.

"Doubtless this seems to you a very commonplace 'ghost story'—one constructed on the regular lines laid down by the old masters of the art. If that were so I should not have related it, even if it were true. The man was not dead; I met him today in Union street. He passed me in a crowd."

Hawver had finished his story and both men were silent. Dr. Frayley absently drummed on the table with his fingers.

"Did he say anything today?" he asked—"anything from which you inferred that he was not dead?"

Hawver stared and did not reply.

"Perhaps," continued Frayley, "he made a sign, a gesture—lifted a finger, as in warning. It's a trick he had—a habit when saying something serious—announcing the result of a diagnosis, for example."

"Yes, he did—just as his apparition had done. But, good God! did you ever know him?"

Hawver was apparently growing nervous.

"I knew him. I have read his book, as will every physician some day. It is one of the most striking and important of the century's contributions to medical science. Yes, I knew him; I attended him in an

illness three years ago. He died."

Hawver sprang from his chair, manifestly disturbed. He strode forward and back across the room; then approached his friend, and in a voice not altogether steady, said: "Doctor, have you anything to say to me—as a physician?"

"No, Hawver; you are the healthiest man I ever knew. As a friend I advise you to go to your room. You play the violin like an angel. Play it. Play something light and lively. Get this cursed bad business off your mind."

The next day Hawver was found dead in his room, the violin at his neck, the bow upon the strings, his music open before him at Chopin's funeral march.



Coming Next Issue

The departure of Nathaire and his pupils occurred in the late spring of 1281, during the interlunar dark. Afterward a new moon waxed above the flowery fields and bright-leaved woods, and waned in ghostly silver. With its waning, people began to talk of other magicians and fresher mysteries.

Then, in the moon-deserted nights of early summer, there came a series of disappearances far more unnatural and inexplicable than that of the dwarfish, malignant sorcerer.

It was found one day, by grave-diggers who had gone early to their toil in a cemetery outside the walls of Vyones, that no less than six newly occupied graves had been opened, and the bodies, which were those of reputable citizens, removed. On closer examination, it became all too evident that this removal had not been effected by robbers. The coffins, which lay aslant or stood protruding upright from the mold, offered all the appearance of having been shattered from within as if by the use of superhuman strength; and the fresh earth itself was upheaved, as if the dead men, in some awful, untimely resurrection, had actually dug their way to the surface.

The corpses had vanished utterly, as if hell had swallowed them; and, as far as could be learned, there were no eye-witnesses of their fate. In those devil-ridden times, only one explanation of the happening seemed credible: demons had entered the graves and had taken bodily possession of the dead, compelling them to arise and go forth.

To the dismay and horror of all Averoigne, the strange vanishment was followed with appalling promptness by many others of a like sort. It seemed as if an occult, resistless summons had been laid upon the dead. Nightly, for a period of two weeks, the cemeteries of Vyons and also those of other towns, of villages and hamlets gave up a ghastly quota of their tenants. From brazen-bolted tombs, from common charnels, from shallow, unconsecrated trenches, from the marble-lidded vaults of churches and cathedrals, the weird exodus went on without cessation.

A number of you have urged us to present this weird account of a frightful vengeance on the part of the wizard Nathaire, against Vyones.

THE COLOSSUS OF YLOURGNE

by Clark Ashton Smith

The Abyss

by David H. Keller, M. D.

(author of *The Seeds of Death, Heredity*)

(Part Two)

Written Winter 1946/47, this was intended as a contemporary story — time; the present. We know now that the gruesome incidents described did not take place in the late 40s, and that was the only time when they could have taken place in a manner such as you will read here. Which in no way detracts from the fact that this is one of the most frightening horror tales we have ever read, if for no other reason than that, while such a thing is unlikely to come about through the alliance of a single scientist and a banker, the cult of scientism, allied with utopians in government might well make guinea pigs of us in experiments with results no less gruesome.

SYNOPSIS OF PART ONE

DR. JOHN JEREMY has become convinced that psychosis is the result of a break in the barrier between the conscious and the subconscious, and that a chemical which he has isolated from the blood of psychotics is the cause. He has tried an experiment wherein volunteers were injected with this chemical, which he calls XYZ; all went into

the abyss of the subconscious. And while they retained their memories, and their ability to speak and understand English, they showed all the emotional impulses and reactions and behavior patterns of primitive people, living in a barbaric environment.

He persuades a wealthy New York banker, HURD, to finance a scientific experiment upon "eight million guinea pigs". A chewing gum

(From *The Solitary Hunters and The Abyss*. copyright 1948 by New Era Publishers; by permission of Robert A. Madle)



illustration by John V. Baltadonis

contest is announced, for residents of New York only; prizes are guaranteed to a large percentage of persons who take a free sample of the new chewing gum, try it, and then suggest a name for it. In each stick of gum is a certain amount of XYZ. After a certain length of time, each person who has chewed the gum will go into the abyss, and begin to exhibit some form of psychotic behavior.

A number of men, and one woman, are hired to report upon what they observe in the city, during this period, although no one has any notion of what to expect, or why he is being hired. GERTRUDE KELLY, the single woman chosen, insists upon knowing who is hiring her, and thus meets Dr. Jeremy, who tells her enough to satisfy her that there is nothing off-color about what she is expected to do.

Jeremy feels that some sort of symbol is desirable for the people in the abyss. He contacts PROFESSOR JUNGERS, an Austrian refugee and world authority on symbology. They decide upon something like Picasso's famous picture of the woman and the rooster; the woman has a huge head, huge breasts and hips, and two eyes on one side of her head. There is a bizarre ballet which has just begun to make a hit in New York. Jeremy arranges for one final scene: a woman dressed and padded out in this manner captures and strangles a man, dressed as a rooster. The added bit to the ballet is greeted with deafening applause by the women in the audience. And the costume appears in New York's stores the next day; the latest craze, as thousands of New York women

suddenly appear in this grotesque outfit, wearing hats that seem to give them two eyes on one side of the head.

Then the "incubation" period is complete; something like eight million New Yorkers start into the abyss, the depth varying with the amount of gum they managed to chew on the day of the great contest. Those who managed to chew two packages go deepest and become cataclyptic; Jeremy sees any number of them sitting on curbstones. Then he sees something else: policemen ordering them to move, and calmly and efficiently crushing their skulls with nightsticks when they do not obey.

In Harlem, Gert Kelly sees the founding of a new religion, presided over by an enormous woman, dressed in the new fashion, who is proclaimed LILY OF THE TWO EYES. It is for women only, and the men find that they are regarded as nothing more than slaves, to be strangled—"loved to death"—unless they fulfill the womens' every whim.

IZZY THE DOPE, a two-bit gangster is inspired to lead raids on small stores; this is so successful he organizes his followers and they prepare to loot all the big stores, too. The Fifth Avenue Merchants Association sends a delegation to the mayor to ask for extra police protection. On consulting the commissioner of police, the mayor is told that this is possible—but the association will have to pay cash. Mayor Van Dorn is stunned at what Commissioner McCarty demands: free beer and food and movies will be given to the poor, but most of the money will be divided among the

police. McCarty goes back with Van Dorn to the merchants and puts it to the association bluntly: those who pay up, in cash, and keep quiet about the payment, will find their stores adequately protected: those who do not—*get hell!* Only two members of the association agree to pay; they deliver the cash as promised, then one leaves the city for Albany and the other for Washington.

The next morning the mob aroused by Izzy the Dope loots a large store, not on the protection list. Police claim that they cannot do anything without harming innocent women and whildren. That afternoon, the rest of the members of the association see the light and pay

tribute. And when Izzy's gang tries a night raid on a protected store, they find the police in mass, waiting for them like an army; the entire mob, with a few exceptions, is wiped out; the wounded are finished off without fuss, the bodies picked up by garbage trucks and dumped into the Bay.

Mayor Van Dorn is horrified by what little he is allowed to hear about events in the city. He is now under McCarty's protection. And when he hears from Albany, inquiring into the story of graft and corruption that has come to the governor's ears, McCarty's orders are simple as to what reply the mayor is to make: "Tell them to go to hell!"

II

BY THE END OF THE THIRD DAY of the XYZ reaction the medical profession of New York realized that they could give hardly more than superficial care to the hundreds of sick men and women who were urgently in need of hospitalization.

For many years the city hospitals had been badly over-crowded and pitifully understaffed. Appeals to the public failed to enlist the services of graduate nurses or fill to capacity the classes of Student Nurses. Volunteer nursing, so popular in war time, ceased to hold its patriotic glamor with the cessation of hostilities.

The City institutions for the insane carried thirty percent excess population. Exposés of inadequate care of these unfortunate abnormals in newspaper and magazine articles created only a momentary hue from the general public. They failed to produce new buildings, larger and more competent staffs or higher salaries for nurses and attendants, except in general promises of relief for the situation.

Conditions in the General Hospitals caring for the poor were also deserving of severe criticism.

Now, suddenly, within a few days, there came an unprecedented increase in the number of irritating psychotics. The hospitals, already

overcrowded, acknowledged they had reached the saturation point and could admit no more patients. Clinics and emergency wards, hastily organized and set up in schools, armories, and other public buildings, were filled overnight.

Suddenly, peculiar alterations in the behavior of nurses and attendants only added to the complexities of the situation. The personnel rapidly divided into three groups: the older employees who had served faithfully and patiently for many years and were most valuable because of this experience and intelligence; they continued faithful. The second group, far younger, reacted to the drug and either became wildly irresponsible or completely catatonic in behaviorism patterns. The third group, due to the XYZ reaction, became sadistic brutes who, before being discovered and checked, murdered, with satanic delight, scores of the unfortunates under their care.

The Medical Society of New York City frankly stated they could not cope with the situation nor had they any solution for the problem. Their appeal for aid to the State Medical Association immediately attracted the attention of the National Red Cross, American Medical Association and the Surgeon General's Office. Physicians and nurses and supplies were at once sent in by the Red Cross, The A. M. A. appointed a committee to investigate and report with suggestions. The Surgeon General conferred with the Secretary of War and his chief of staff and upon their advice sent the following telegram to the mayor of New York:

"The Army, under the direction of the Surgeon General is prepared to send sufficient Medical Battalions, with tentage, and equipped to care for three thousand patients. Wire acceptance immediately stating space, facilities, and disposal of units and locations of same. If housing is unavailable name usable parks, locations and other pertinent information."

Because of the strict and efficient twenty-four-hour guard, the mayor knew little of the actual conditions in his city. Therefore he was much bewildered by the contents of the telegram. Even by re-reading he gained nothing of its import. Going into Commissioner McCarty's office he handed the paper to him asking: "What does this mean, Bill?"

"Simply that those people in Washington are trying to interfere with our affairs. We don't need any outside help. Of course our hospitals are a bit crowded but I have a solution to that which we will use at the proper time."

"But I have to answer this telegram!"

"No! I'll do that."

Taking paper from the drawer of his desk he wrote very rapidly for a moment, then read what he had written:

"The Surgeon General: Medical conditions in New York under control. Situation does not require aid from outside agencies. Red Cross help adequate. Cannot accommodate Hospital Units in armories or parks. If help is needed will ask for it."

Shoving the paper across the desk he said to the mayor, "Sign that on the dotted line, Henry."

Mayor Van Dorn read, moving his lips meanwhile.

"That is pretty blunt. McCarty. However I suppose you are in full touch with the situation—far more closely than I am. No one seems to be willing to tell me anything. You said you had a solution. What is it?"

"Nothing original—old methods—Germany used it for many years, before the war as well as during hostilities. I have been talking with one of the physicians who fled Europe. He used to be in charge of a hospital there. He did not know why I was asking so many questions, though. When the time comes we will just take the incurables, segregate them and then apply the treatment. Hell of a word he called it—never heard it before—so got him to write it in my notebook—. Thumbing through a small pocket notebook he scowled, "Here it is, E-u-t-h-e-n-a-s-i-a. Yeah, that's the way it's spelled, all right."

"But that is—" exclaimed the Mayor.

"No—easy does it, as he explained the thing to me. All the doctor does is give them a shot in the arm and off they go, bye-bye! If the doctors have too much to do the police will be glad to help them." Here McCarty laughed, a strange look in his eyes. "No need of burials, of informing relatives or any publicity. Garbage trucks at night and the—river. Hell! We can clean out the hospitals in a few days."

Mayor Henry Van Dorn stood ashen faced, gripping the edge of the desk with hands that had no feeling. He was both afraid and too stunned to make reply. Hazily he felt that Bill McCarty was crazy.

"You don't like it, eh, Henry?" sneered McCarty. "Your sensitive soul revolts? This is just the beginning, for there will be lots more things happening from day to day that you will like even less. Just don't talk too much: Everything is under my control, including yourself."

In the meantime the psychiatrists of the city, aided by the most noted specialists from Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, were asking the question, "Why?" They were trying to find some common cause; some basic disease, that would, in a few days, cause such an unprecedented increase in various psychoses, a new and inexplicable hysterical response to a Wagnerian ballet; a series of murders by suffocation; an unusual increase in all crimes, especially directed against the rich, and a complete breakdown in the morale of the police who were exhibiting the most callous brutality in even the most trivial instances.

The consensus of medical opinion was that the city seemed to be in the grip of a mass hysteria similar to the Dancing Mania and The Children's Crusade of medieval times. They felt something drastic was needed to check its further development but what the therapy was to be they didn't know, since they had no positive diagnosis from which to work.

Psychoanalysts, though outnumbered by psychiatrists, had one advantage: *They* knew what should be done and were certain they were absolutely correct in both diagnosis and treatment. Their minority report, read to the Committee by the most noted female psychoanalyst in the city, was a model of brevity and self-assurance.

"In our opinion the diagnosis of the disease causing the present reactions in New York City is mass hysteria.

"We suggest immediate treatment by means of Group Psychoanalysis. We advise the formation of as many clinics as competent analysis can care for, each clinic to treat one hundred patients.

"In these clinics analysis will be given in an effort to bring up from the subconscious the basic causes for this mass hysteria.

"When this analysis is completed and the patients realize the subconscious causes of their reactions, which are abnormal, it is our opinion that the hysterical masses will return to their normal behavior."

Doctor Howard, Chairman of the Medical Investigating Committee, listened with grave interest as the woman analyst read the report.

"Thank you, Doctor Mowers. That was a very interesting report. But, I would like to ask Doctor H. Mowers a few questions. First: How many competent psychoanalysts are there in the city available for this work?"

"Not more than twelve."

"If this form of treatment is given, how long would it be before it resulted in cure?"

"Private patients," was her reply, "usually need two or more treatments a week for a five year period. Of course we could give groups

of one hundred patients daily treatments but, as group analyses are not as satisfactory as are the private ones, we would not gain much time. I believe, however, that in five years a fair percentage of treated patients would understand, in some degree at least, just what their subconscious holds."

"If that is the case," replied Doctor Howard, wryly, "we will file your report for further consideration if the Committee as a whole so desires. Has any one any further suggestions? If not we will adjourn until tomorrow at this same time."

12

STARTLING EVENTS TOOK PLACE in the city faster than they could be accurately evaluated by Jeremy and Hurd. The banker spent less time in his office and more time in his library with the Doctor. They had persuaded Professor Jungers to move to the New Yorker and devote himself to digesting and summarizing the daily letters from the five reporters.

Realizing that Jungers was a stranger in a strange land and liable to injuries and even death on the street, they had urged the old man to do no personal investigating, especially at night. The scientist promised to take him out daily for exercise.

On the afternoon of the seventh day of the XYZ reaction the two experimenters were talking in Hurd's library.

"These reports are becoming very interesting," commented the banker. "At first I was afraid that nothing would happen—now I fear too much will happen. Those five reporters are doing excellent work. For example, Webb's report on the early riots and Miss Kelly's description of the beginning of that new religion in Harlem. They lost no time in adopting your symbol—those women of Harlem.

"But I am rather surprised that there is so little about these local events in the papers, or over the radio."

"My explanation of that," replied the Doctor, "is simply a guess. It may be that someone in authority has forced the news agencies to minimize the whole reaction. Civic pride has to be considered. And newspapers live on advertising. Thousands of visitors come to New York daily to shop and be entertained. If the actual facts were known many people would postpone their visit. Even the New Yorkers living in the suburbs might feel they would be safer if they shopped in their own

areas, close to home. In addition we must consider the politicians. They dare not have too much publicity; it might lead to the Governor intervening."

"That is true," said the banker thoughtfully. "Also, big business depends to a very large extent on a constant flow of cash from outside investors. The stock market is reacting, not much, but some. To change the subject. Do you still feel that Professor Junger's daily report should be published sometime, if only for distribution to colleges and libraries?"

"I have been thinking about that. It should be available to future generations—but, would they profit by it? Man is slow to learn anything of value through experience, lived or read. Did the politicians of the world learn anything from World War One and remember it? Did their knowledge help in any way to prevent World War Two? Or realize that certain present events must predicate World War Three? You know the answer."

"Then what have we accomplished? And this is only the seventh day! Bad enough already. Remember the attempt to sack Stahl's Department Store? One of our reporters estimated that about a thousand from the tenements were killed—even the wounded—and carted like garbage to the East River—dumped in! Something has happened to the police."

"I think I understand," explained Jeremy. "They have simply reverted to the conduct of the Roman Legions. Many of them under the influence of XYZ and the others from imitative hysteria. We cannot blame it all on the drug. Hitler's Gestapo took none of it. Genghis Khan built a pyramid of a million human skulls, but he was an amateur compared with the Germans who destroyed many millions by torture and the gas chamber. The French made gloves from the skins of the Aristocracy but the ladies of Germany made lampshades from tattooed skins selected while the skin bearers were still alive. None of these killers took XYZ. There is a thin veneer of civilization covering basic, primitive man. It does not take much to remove that covering. I ask you two questions. *What is civilization? On the action of some mass stimulation do entire nations form and react to the chemical XYZ?*"

"I have no answers. But give me your opinion. Will the mass reaction in the city become more severe?"

"I believe so. We have started something. Only time will tell where it will stop."

On the fifth day cultured society began to ferment. This started with the younger women who were members of the Junior League. Without

doubt it originated in the mind of one debutante, but it was a thought which became popular very rapidly. It was primarily a revolt against the hideousness of the two eyed, vulgar, feminine fashion. While it was the mode it was lots of fun, but when Lily, the Harlem Goddess, made it a part of a new religion, it at once became cheap and worthless to the women of wealth.

Many of these had entered the chewing gum contest, announcing that if they won any prizes the money would be devoted to charity. Thus numerous socially prominent young women had rapidly gone down into the abyss. They felt the new urge for self-expression without repression but rapidly lost interest in anything dominated by an African jungle goddess. As a very satisfactory substitute they decided to return to Olympus.

When it was suggested to the Directors of the Metropolitan Museum that they surrender all control of the building to the Junior League they were horrified at what they considered sacrilege. Wealth, power and political influence forced them to surrender their position. Immediately important changes were made to harmonize the building and its art treasures with the new religion.

The large domed room in back of the main entrance was emptied and filled with ferns. Canaries sang in gilded cages. In the center of the ferns stood a life size marble Venus de Milo. Incense burned in bronze braziers. A dozen lovely debutantes in diaphanous, white robes attended the goddess and explained the new religion to eager novices. The ensemble was a combination of beauty and ethereal love.

In a room on the right stood a statue of Apollo. In the room to the left a marble Bacchus, visible to and only to be worshipped by the initiates of the Inner Circle. The pictures and art treasures in the rest of the Museum were undisturbed, but over a hundred luxurious couches were placed in semi-private locations.

Those of the rich who had taken the drug XYZ had a very clear conception of the reason for and the meaning of the new Temple. Others of the elite were eager to join in the novel form of worship simply because it was something new and evidently a very desirable escape from tedium. Matrons joined the young buds of the social order. Scions of wealth, thrilled with the hint that here was a religion in which morals had little part, contributed freely to the necessary financing. The husbands and fathers for years had little knowledge as to how the women in their families occupied their time. They remained for a while in their customary ignorance; when they ascertained the actualities it was too late for them

to protest. Some, however, were rather pleased with the basic principle of the new religion.

On the morning of the eighth day of the community disorder Hurd telephoned to Jeremy asking him to come to his library at once. From his tense voice it was evident that he was in distress.

The Doctor rang the bell. No answer. He opened the door. No welcoming Perkins. Not till he entered the library and saw Hurd silent in his chair did he suspect the possibility of tragedy.

The rich man tried to smile as he said, "The experiment has been a success, Doctor, an eminent success as far as my family is concerned. Last night my wife told me that my son and daughter had already joined the cult. It appears that Mrs. Hurd is going to be *the* Priestess. Because of her beauty my daughter has been selected as the woman best suited to be the living representative of the marble goddess. My son will be a priest devoting himself to the worship of my daughter. It seems that the three are going to live and love in the old museum."

"Evidently the drug worked," exclaimed the scientist. "Perkins was not wrong in his summary of their subconscious desires."

"That is not all. Perkins, in spite of our faith in him, must have chewed some of the gum. For the last twenty-four hours he acted strangely. This morning he rushed into this room and told me he was ready to carry out his program. I am sure he did not know that my family had left the house, but he wanted to start with me!"

"What happened?"

"I had to kill him. I am a very poor boxer but I *can* shoot. His body is in the Butler's pantry. What comes next?"

Jeremy gave that question serious consideration before he replied. "The action of your family will not go unnoticed by City Hall. So far you have simply been one of the rich men in the city. Now you are the husband of the Priestess of the Temple and the father of two important members of the new cult. In a way they are as prominent as your wife. I am certain that the police do not wish to interfere with this new religion any more than they did with the one started by Lily of the Two Eyes. In fact the politicians must have aided in the commandeering of the museum.

"While they do not want to check its development they certainly mean to control it. It will be an excellent source of graft. Overnight you, through your family, have become closely connected with it. My opinion is that as soon as the news reaches them they will demand hush-money from you; if you refuse to come across they will simply arrest you and hold

you as a hostage. When they find Perkins' body in the pantry that will make it so much easier."

"I think you are right."

"Then," continued Jeremy, "I have two questions. First, have you any ready cash in the house?"

"Yes. I always have several hundred thousand in large bills."

"Good. Do you know anyone in Washington? I mean intimately."

"Certainly. The senior senator of New York. The President and I were classmates at Harvard."

"Then here is my advice. Leave me about twenty thousand. I will at once pay the reporters in cash and discharge them. I do not want to use the checking account you set up in my name. *You get out of the city as soon as you can and go to Washington.* Live in the Mayflower Hotel. The time may come when you will be more useful in Washington alive than you would be in New York—a prisoner or dead."

"I do not like that," responded Hurd. "Looks as though I was deserting the ship."

"Not at all. You must not feel that way. There is really little more that you could do if you stayed here."

"Why don't you go with me?"

"I can't. This is my experiment and I have to see it through to the bitter end—no matter what the ending is. Besides, there are two persons I feel responsible for—the Professor and Miss Kelly."

"I had an idea that you had become interested in her. What are your plans?"

"Very simple. I will return at once to the New Yorker—contact the other two—we will check out. It will be safer from now on to live in a cheap hotel under new names. I will send the four reporters what is due them with the simple statement, 'No more reports.' They won't object if paid. I am confident that Miss Kelly, the Professor and I can continue the daily summary. It is hard to explain but I feel that the future days will develop into a catastrophe so startling that even the most clever fictionist could not imagine it—and I want to see the ending."

"Perhaps your plan is best. I will go and pack."

"For God's sake, don't stop to pack. Get the money and leave at once. You can buy what you need in Washington. Just get that cash and we will be on our way."

Hurd locked the front door. One block down the street he paused. "So this is good-bye to my family and city."

"And just in time. Don't turn to look around. In front of your house are two police cars. It looks as though you had visitors. In a few minutes they will find Perkins. Too late for you to try the tube, ferry or bridges. Take the subway to Upper Manhattan and a taxi from there. Just keep going."

"This will be an adventure," remarked the fugitive, with a wan smile. "Do you know I have never been in the subway?"

"Well, that is interesting. I will put you on a train."

The two friends shook hands just before Hurd entered the train. Then Jeremy climbed rapidly back to the street.

"Poor fellow," he mused. "He did not go into the abyss, but I believe he is going to go into a hell that is even worse. I hope he makes his escape. Captured, even his millions will not save him."

13

NOTHING THAT THE RICH IN NEW YORK do remain long a secret from the poor. The news of the religion recently established in the Metropolitan Museum spread like wildfire overnight through Harlem.

Lily, the Two-eyed Goddess, in spite of her monstrous body, had an unusually high intelligence. She was able to think clearly and logically. The new religion she had so skillfully capitalized on had expanded rapidly and she wanted it to continue. There had been no attempt on the part of the law to interfere. Men had been killed, and a few women; but the city was in such confusion that little, if any, investigation was made by the Homicide Bureau.

In spite of the beating drums, the adoration of the women, the complete subjugation of the males, Lily was not satisfied. Behind her every thought was the desire to rule the entire city. A few white women had joined her worshippers, but these were cheap, drab, common women. Lily wanted to control white, cultured Manhattan. She could not understand her failure.

The underlying psychological explanation was simple. To the colored woman worked in the city unless she wished to. The men were working freedom, emotional outlet and feminine rule. During these days no colored women worked in the city unless she wished to. The men were working overtime, and for the first time in history were bringing all their wages to the women. They had their choice of doing this or not doing it. If they refused they had to decide between killing their women or being killed. They had no clear idea of what had happened to them but most

of them submitted to the new financial program as the easiest way to keep alive.

With the white women of social standing the entire pattern of life was different. For generations they had lived a parasitic life, supported in luxury by their husbands or lovers. As the years passed they demanded more and contributed less to the comfort or welfare of the male. Fifty years before, they carried his children as well as his diamonds. Now they rarely bore anything except the diamonds. A religion that offered them only masculine support was unnecessary and unattractive, for they already had everything necessary to provide them with ease of living, leisure and every possible luxury. Worship of the goddess Venus meant something. It had an appeal lacking in the Virgin Mary and was a million times better than going completely native and bowing before an African goddess.

Lily heard of the program being prepared for the introduction of this new cult. She knew that if it captured the fancy of the rich women there would be no more ladies on Fifth Avenue with two eyes on the left face, no more social leaders with massive breast and enormous buttocks. She realized that fashions were made on Fifth Avenue and quickly followed in Harlem. If the rich started to worship Venus the poor would rapidly lose interest in Lily. She had no education except from the school of the gutter; her only degrees had been received from the college of the brothel. To her Venus was simply a new name which she did not understand. But the implications behind that name threatened competition.

In disguise she obtained employment in the museum as a scrub-woman. Carelessly leaving her work she spent some hours looking at the Greek and Roman statuary. An old guide, inspired by her obvious interest, patiently explained the nude marbles. He told her that the Greeks and Romans had worshipped feminine beauty, and had preserved it in marble as a heritage for all time; that frequently women had changed the shape of their bodies, almost to mutilation, but had always returned to the ancient figure and dress which allowed the utmost freedom and exposure. Lily listened intently until they came to Venus de Milo. Then she gave the guide a dollar tip and dismissed him. It was thrilling to give money to a white man -- and have him take it.

Lily stood looking at Venus.

She tried to understand just why the marble woman was considered beautiful. She compared the marble woman with herself. The more she thought the less she could comprehend why any one should consider

the armless woman finer, in any way, than Lily, the only woman in Harlem who could follow the latest fashion without padding.

So the rich women were going to worship a living woman with this shape! They called her Venus! She would remember that name! The guide had told her that next Saturday evening, in the Opera House, a woman, like this marble one in every way, except of course one was dead and the other living, was going to show off this beauty. That meant that all white women would try to be like her. After that, a very few days afterward, the colored women would throw away their extra eye and big pads; no longer would they listen to Lily and bring her luxuries. Lily knew that once she lost her hold on the Harlem women there were thousands of men who would gladly kill her.

Africa had to conquer Rome: Lily had to destroy Venus. There was not enough room in New York for both. Lily knew no history, but she had sufficient imagination to know that a goddess destroyed was a goddess that would not be worshipped. She determined once and for all to show the women of New York which goddess was the most powerful. It would have to be a public conflict, a destruction of her competitor which would leave no doubt in the minds of the observers. As she walked out of the Temple she began laying her plans.

In the evening Dr. Jeremy called on Miss Kelly in her shabby hotel-room. "I have been so busy," he said, "that I have been unable to see you as often as I wished. From your reports, however, you have been actively observing feminine New York. What happened today?"

"Some very interesting things, mostly centered around the old Metropolitan Museum. You probably know about its change to the Temple of Venus.

"I think I can give you the real facts. You know it as it used to be—lovely place. Many a day I spent there feasting on the beauty when I could not afford more solid food. You would not recognize the place now. I can not imagine how they did it, but these women simply threw out the old directors and reorganized the entire management. I thought the religion of Lily The Two Eyes was primitive and obscene but in many ways it was respectable compared with this new one—as practiced in the Temple of Venus. My opinion is that it is definitely decadent, not altered in any way by the beauty and culture of the devotees. They live, as well as worship, there."

"Did you feel inclined to join them?"

"No—for many reasons. But-er-well—I might as well tell you. For

two days I have worked there as a scrub-woman, washing marble floors and helping arrange the new furniture. It gave me ample opportunity to see what it was going to be like. More of that later, though. Who do you think I saw there? None other than Lily, minus the extra eye, scrubbing the floor almost beside me. She might take off the hat but her breasts and buttocks are permanent attachments. She didn't scrub long but left her bucket and started to look over the marble nudes. All that was *news* to me."

"Why do you think she was doing it? Certainly not because she needed money."

"Of course not. She must be very rich by now. Up to some new devilment—that's my guess."

"Were the women beautiful?"

"They certainly were. No one but a woman absolutely content with her body would dare wear those dresses. The Temple gossips told me that the Priestess and her daughter, a Mrs. Hurd, they said, were the loveliest of all. And the men! John Jeremy, don't let me ever suspect that you are even thinking of visiting that place. Of course you are older than most of the men I saw there—but no doubt the bald headed buzzards will flock there by the hundreds. Later might be called 'Buzzards Roost' instead of the Temple of Love."

"The men wore togas—I suppose to make them look more Roman. They acted as guides to the lady visitors while the nightgown-girls escorted the pop-eyed males. Of course many of the rooms were closed to all except the worshipers but a visitor can easily become a worshiper by paying a hundred dollars, tossing some incense into a brazier and changing into a Roman costume."

"What then? This sounds exciting."

"I will leave the rest of it to your imagination. But that is not the worst of it. The entire surrounding neighborhood has changed in a few days. Dozens of bakeries and they sell only doughnuts and crullers."

"I bet the Professor will rave over that!"

"Over what?"

"Over the bakeries and what they sell. How about the rest of the houses?"

"Well—you can get the general idea. Not all women are lovely enough to serve Venus in the Temple and not all men can pay one hundred dollars to worship her. Here is the important thing: Not one woman I saw wore the two eyed hat and the padded dress. That fad died out almost as rapidly as it developed. In Harlem they may still be strong

for Lily, but believe me! The white women of New York have started to support Venus one hundred percent."

"I don't like it," said Jeremy. "It is interesting but then — There are a lot of things happening in New York that I don't like."

"I feel the same way," agreed Kelly. "At times I wish we were safely out of it. I saw a ranch in Montana once. It was for sale. Pretty wild but not as wild as this city. A woman could be happy there if she had the right man to take care of her."

"You should not have any trouble finding the man, Gert."

"Perhaps not. Perhaps I could find him easy enough. It seems to be a lot harder though to make him realize he has been found."

14

THOSE WHO WORSHIPPED in the Temple of Venus made haste to introduce their new religion to a sensation-hungry, hysterical and partly drugged society.

Seventeen days after the appearance of the two-eyed woman in the Venusburg Ballet the directors of the new cult rented the Opera House for one night, issuing fifteen hundred invitations to those whom they were confident the message they had to offer would mean much.

Seven-hundred and fifty women, all of the Social Register, were present accompanied by their male escorts. While the motif of the entertainment was purely feminine it had an undercurrent of appeal to the male. Once the fur coats were removed it was easily seen that the dresses were all of Roman influence. Though there was more material used in the garments and the bodies, figuratively at least, were more covered than in the modern evening gown, the fabric selected were far more revealing, some being little more than marquissette.

Luscious, dreamy music by the orchestra was the first number on the program. This was followed by a ballet by twenty of the young women, all in transparent white, dancing in the soft light to muted strings, their soft bodies swaying in the figures of the interpretive dance.

A curtain talk followed, by the President of the Junior League wherein she explained, in a modulated, cultured voice, the urgent need of beauty in life and dress; how important was the free expression of both beauty and love; explaining that the sublimity of either could be reached only by complete loss of inhibition. She said she felt the very rapid revolt against the bizzare and ugly styles so recently worn was proof of her statements. Women had to worship, she continued, and since this was

true, what could be more appropriate than that they should worship the most lovely thing, the feminine body beautiful. From henceforth the women of New York pledged themselves to worship this gorgeous creature—the woman beautiful. They would reflect this worship in their dress, their thought and their life; they would have a new goddess, the goddess who epitomized beauty, love and perfection.

As the curtain-folds hid her the orchestra played slow, seductively sensuous music which made the audience hold its breath with its sweet suggestions. To muted, minor strains came Diane Hurd, a dream-beautiful blonde with a figure which duplicated all the measurements of Venus de Milo. Dressed in white chiffon she walked, as in a dream, to the center of the huge stage where she stood posing as the spot lights carressed her. Slowly she loosened a shoulder fastening, slipping her gown to her lower waist, holding it with one hand while raising the other arm, curved, above her head. The audience rose shouting approval, filling the house with applause. smiling sweetly she allowed her-draperies to fall to the floor, holding her hands invitingly toward the audience who were now shouting: "Venus! Venus! *Our New Goddess of Love!*"

There is no doubt that as a symbol of life and love and a new pattern of living Diane Hurd personified all her beholders dreamed of. More than one male arm went firmly around a soft feminine waist; more than one pair of masculine lips met willing response from feminine counterparts.

Then the program was interrupted by an unprogrammed entrance.

Lily the Two Eyes had made her plans most carefully. At exactly the right moment, followed by thirty of the strongest females in her adherents, she entered the stage door of the Opera House, silently killing the guards and stage hands before they could give a sign of warning. Once in the wings they waited for the psychological moment. At the height of the applause for the divine woman living representative of the Goddess of Love, the thirty and one jungle women rushed onto the stage.

The shouts of alarm came too late to save Venus. Lily caught her in her arms, raised her in the air and shaking her with the rapidity of an enraged hyena killed her, mutilating her before the eyes of the horrified audience. It was over before the stricken audience were fully aware of what was happening. The bleeding body of the new goddess was thrown to the floor where Lily trampled it with her spade-like feet. Facing the footlights she shouted her jungle defiance, her little army of thirty joining in the chant:

*"The eyes! The Eyes! The Eyes!
The Eyes of the Goddess so wise!
Look at The Eyes! The wonderful Eyes!
She will direct us. The Eyes! The Eyes!
She will protect us! The Eyes! The Eyes!"*

Not a man in the house had ever done a day of manual labor but they had played football, polo, golf, baseball and tennis. All were young and most of them in good physical health. Their shock lasted but a few seconds and was followed by blind rage. It was not only Diane Hurd who had been killed but, figuratively, every soft, desirable woman beside them. They could see the clutching fingers of this female reaching for their own delectable woman. Consumed with lust for revenge they rushed *enmasse* to the stage.

Seven hundred and fifty white men against thirty-one colored women, all fighting with nothing but hands, teeth and feet as weapons. Impelled by one desire—to kill, but in killing they themselves must live. Africa had destroyed the beauty of ancient world. Rome determined to erase the insult by blotting out Africa. It was a battle between male lions and female gorillas.

One by one the women protecting Lily were torn from the center of the milling crowd, passed to the struggling men and killed with their white, soft hands while teeth tore at their flesh. Men died and were trodden upon by the insensible living. Some of the white women watching from the auditorium, placed their vanities on the chairs and joined their friends, doing a bit of fighting and mutilating on their own account. When they reached the outer edge of the struggling men they discovered, some of the Negro women still lived. These dainty women had, for the time, being, forgotten Venus and had become followers of Diana the Huntress. Once in their manicured hands the Negresses died quickly.

At last only Lily remained alive. Bleeding, torn, she stood unsteadily but still shouting her defiance. At last they pulled her down to her knees. A dozen men tore and broke her while she bit and clawed as long as she could kill, a white neck to tear with her hands, an eye to eviserate with her claws.

The battle lasted less than a half hour.

Under a pile of gory humanity lay Venus. She was no longer a goddess: she had become a martyr.

One white woman had died. Thirty-one colored women had joined her. There is no record of the number of men who followed these thirty-two into the unknown.

G. G. Kelly, Dr. Jeremy and Professor Jungers had watched the entire occurrence from the gallery. They had come to witness the birth of a new goddess, the conception of a novel fashion, the adoption of beauty instead of horror in feminine style. That is what they had come to see. They had not expected such an ending and were as shocked as the rest of the entertainment seekers.

Doctor Jeremy turned to the Reporter. "What is going to happen now, G. G.?"

"Anything is possible. Wait until the news spreads. What will they say? That many colored women have been killed? No! The only news is that Negro women have killed a white woman, one of the most beautiful in the city. They came here deliberately; killing her in a beastly manner. Wait until the men hear this. Before morning there will be such riots as never before happened in any American city. That is what is going to happen."

At the hotel Miss Kelly said she did not want to talk; her job was at the typewriter for the next few hours. The men bade her a goodnight at the elevator and entered the room they shared.

The old professor was trembling slightly as he began to talk. "You know, I left Europe because I wanted peace and security; a chance to live and work. All I gained in New York was the latter. Life in America is very different than I dreamed. A peculiar madness has developed here expressing itself in ways that daily grow more and more terrible."

"I want to ask you a question, Professor. Have you seen anything here that you did not either see or hear of in Europe? Is life here very different than in Austria? History repeats itself. How about life under Hitler or life in Rome under Caesar? Mankind is better educated but not more intelligent. Life moves in cycles—the symbol of the worm swallowing his tail is as apropos today in New York as it was in Babylon, Carthage, Rome or Berlin. Few centuries have passed without some outbreak of mass insanity; psychotic leaders guiding hysterical followers downward into the Pit—. There is one thing we may learn—. We know what happened in these past debacles—. Perhaps our study of this one may give us the answer to the question 'Why'?"

EVEN THE WORST FEARS OF Miss Kelly were short of the actualities of the hours to come. The news of the battle in the Metropolitan Opera House spread like flames in a forest fire fanned by a fifty

mile an hour gale. Those who first heard the story heard that a lovely white woman had been brutally killed by Negroes. As the tale was retold it became more twisted by rumor. First a colored woman had killed a white women—then that a Negro uprising had been planned—all white men were to be killed and all white women enslaved. Within a few hours thousands of white men were marching to Harlem for revenge.

On their way they paused at every taproom, every hotel, all places where they might find victims. Finding them, they killed and went on. Upper Broadway became a solid mass of men with one purpose, the crushing of a subordinate race. As they went they gathered weapons—clubs, stones, pieces of iron and fire. Their prey fled from them, or unable to flee, fought like so many thousand rats. Most of them did not know what had caused the attack, what had precipitated the white tornado; all they knew was that suddenly they must run or fight, and fighting, must kill or be killed.

Soon Harlem was flaming in twenty places. Fire fighting apparatus could not move through the streets packed solid with fightcrazed men. The police joined the fight, each for their own color. Men fought till they dropped from exhaustion, drank from looted taprooms, and killed more savagely because of the drunkenness. At first only colored men were hunted, but soon women, children and even babies were being killed because they had African blood. Upper Manhattan alarmed, blocked the escape northward.

Morning dawned. Into Harlem came the truck drivers, stevedors, garment workers, mechanics from every trade. White men who had perhaps treated their own women brutally now rose to preserve the sacredness of the white female and the sanctity of the home. The first wave of invaders, drunk, bloodstained, exhausted by the lust of killing, were replaced by fresh men made more frantic by the difficulty of finding new victims.

In downtown Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, especially the Fort Green section the killing was confined to small localities. Here and there, children, encouraged by their parents, hunted other little children and clubbed them to death.

By the morning of the third day the fire of hate died. The supply of fuel was exhausted. The fire department swung into action, not to save Harlem but to protect the surrounding city. Sanitation trucks collected mangled, burned bodies and dumped them into the Hudson River. Stores which escaped the fire were rapidly looted, the police reserving the first choice.

The commissioner of police, without consulting the mayor, had immediately placed a strict censorship on every form of communication; radio, telegraph and long distance telephone. Thus thousands of the decent citizens of New York, who had not taken the Chemical XYZ, and, on the first night, were safe in their homes, had little knowledge of what had taken place. All they knew was rumor; all they could see was the cloud of smoke over the ruined city within a city.

Because of the strict censorship the press outside New York printed reports of the riot that were wholly inadequate. One reporter, however, representing a paper internationally known for its truth and moderation, was a witness of the tragedy from its beginning in the Opera House. He evaded the censorship by chartering several tugboats to carry his articles to a Connecticut port. His twelve hour reports were dispassionate and accurate. Excellent reporting!

For two days the mayor sent repeated requests to Commissioner McCarty to see him. McCarty simply replied that he was too busy. At last the mayor lost patience and called on his subordinate and apparently insubordinate official.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked. The mayor had grown very old. Once mentioned as good, sturdy, Presidential timber, he now seemed nothing but a rotten, falling tree.

"What is there to do?" sneered McCarty. "After all it was their own fault. And what is Harlem anyway? Just a city slum. The fire saved us the expense of tearing it down and replacing it with modern buildings. You call in the reporters. Tell them that the riot is under control; that you are arranging for a government loan to rebuild it. Tell them that under your administration Harlem will be one of the best sections of the city. Tell them anything! And remember this: For every black man killed, there is an extra job for a white man. No more unemployment in this city. The police are not to blame; it would have taken the United States Army to stop that mob. You need not be afraid. You are still mayor of the largest city in the country and you will keep on being mayor as long as you take my advice."

"And suppose I stop?" asked the old man.

"Then you stop being mayor."

"But suppose I stop and simply become your rubber stamp and the Governor or even the President intervenes. I am certain the entire country is alarmed. Almost every hour I am being called on long distance, but before I am able to talk the connections are cut. Are you responsible for that?"

"Perhaps. But the Governor will not take action unless you ask him."

"That is what you think. Personally I am not so sure."

"Why not resign and take a vacation?"

"I have been thinking of it. Come to my office tomorrow at 9:30. In the meantime try to restore order."

That afternoon, the old man, alone, wrote a long letter. It took time as this was the first letter in longhand he had written for many years. In it he reviewed the details of the entire situation, from the very beginning. He spared neither himself or his commissioner. The letter made no excuses and offered few explanations. He wrote only the facts as he knew them. This letter he finally gave to one of his private secretaries with the request that it be delivered at once to the Governor in Albany. This young man had seemingly been one of McCarty's ardent supporters. Thus he was able to avoid suspicion. The next morning he delivered the letter.

Van Dorn turned out the office lights and, standing by a window, looked over the great city. It seemed to be asleep. He recalled the acclaim of its people when he had taken his oath of office as mayor. What had happened to these people?

In the darkness he returned to his deskchair, opened a drawer, and closed his hand on what he sought. A shot. That was all.

16

THE DAY AFTER RECEIPT of Mayor Van Dorn's letter the Governor of New York called on the President of The United States. Independently each had arrived at the conclusion that something had to be done immediately to save New York City from itself.

"I am afraid," said the Governor, "that we cannot entirely depend on our National Guard. As you know some of the best Guard regiments in the country are within the city limits. I ordered them, against the protest of the mayor, into action. What was the result? They refused to obey. Mass mutiny. The officers of one regiment notified me they would defend the city against invasion but would take no military action against their own people: that if I ordered out of the city units into the city they would repel them. For some reason, the police (and I used to think them the finest in America) have completely lost their morale. They held up the department stores for over a million; spent some of it on the poor and pocketed the balance. They abetted, and participated in, that race riot.

"I have hesitated," continued the Governor, "to see you personally

about this peculiar situation, because I hoped that in some way we might correct it within the city or state, if need be, without involving the Federal Government. However, when I received Mayor Van Dorn's letter which ended in the statement that he was about to commit suicide, it seemed it was all so far out of hand that the only thing to do was have a conference with you. Please read Van Dorn's letter. It is a long one and gives many details which I could previously only surmise."

The President read and re-read the last letter of Mayor Van Dorn.

"I have known much of this," said the President, "but we have a unique form of government. You hesitated to use force unless the mayor asked for your help. I hesitated to intervene unless you, as Governor, asked me to do so. From the beginning I have had the Secret Service there and have received daily reports from them. In all probability I know about as much of the conditions within the city as you do. I have tried to discover what is wrong but about all I can decide is that the entire population is sick with some peculiar malady—hysteria, perhaps. Sick people cannot care for themselves neither can sick officials govern properly. Why don't you go to the City and assume control?"

"Want an honest reply?"

"Certainly."

"I am afraid to unless I have military protection," admitted the Governor. "As long as I received only anonymous threatening letters I considered them the work of paranoiacs. Immediately after the suicide of the mayor, the police commissioner wrote me, sending the letter by courier plane. The head of the police force in the largest city in America said that unless I appointed him mayor I had better remain away from New York—if I valued my life."

"He actually said that?"

"Positively! Here is his letter. As you will see, he boasts of his control of all law-enforcement agencies of the city, including the National Guard units. He makes the none-too-veiled threat that should any attempt be made to take over the management or direction of the city affairs, that the city might secede, under his official guidance, establishing a separate nation."

"That man must be mad!"

"Perhaps. But I am taking no chances. He has thousands of armed men under him—who will obey him if the city is attacked. They have ample guns and ammunition—especially the Guard units. How long do you think the regular Army would need to conquer the city if it came to such a conflict? Suppose the citizens supported McCarty? The more I

think of it the more I wonder if proclaiming martial law will solve the question."

"What do you think is the wisest course: Call in the Army or completely isolate the city?"

"Millions of people would then starve," answered the Governor. "That is something we must consider. We want to cure the city, not destroy it. If we could only make the leaders of this sick city prisoners, the movement might die from lack of leadership. Suppose we wait for twenty-four hours instead of sending them an ultimatum. Perhaps the way will become clear if we sleep over it rather than staying awake. We will send food, supplies and help of all kinds. Let us treat them as sick people rather than national rebels."

"That is a humanitarian thought," answered the President, "but at best it is only a weak, temporary compromise. However an idea has just come to me: Most of the congressmen from New York are here in Washington. I will ask them to come at once to the White House for a joint conference with the Cabinet. You must tell them the whole story, just as you have told it to me. We then can ask for opinions, freely expressed. That might be best: consult with them before I arrive at any decision."

An hour later legislators and cabinet officials, greatly perturbed, listened to the Governor's report. At its close the President asked the senior Senator from New York State for his opinion.

Senator Watkins replied briefly and without hesitation, "I consider the situation most grave. Serious enough to demand occupation and policing by regular army units, aided by trusted units of the National Guard. I recommend martial law until the emergency is passed."

"I may have to do that," agreed the President. "It is a hard thing to do, but a surgeon has to decide whether to operate drastically, at times, or allow the patient to die. We might send a joint telegram to the police commissioner, sheriff and commanding officers of all the units of the National Guard within the city saying that unless the situation is under control within the next twenty-four hours the regular Army will take over and remain as long as is necessary, in our judgement."

"I object," almost shouted Senator Costello. "My colleague is from upstate. He has never lived in the city. He does not know the temper of the people. I do. I have filled every political position from precinct worker up to mayor and now Senator. If you send troops it will be like the Commune in Paris—the people will fight behind barricades—from house to house—. You may destroy the city but you will never conquer it."

Representative Abrams asked permission to speak. He was the sole representative of the Labor Party. Harlem was his district.

"From very vague, and probably distorted, reports, it seems that many of my faithful constituents are dead. I assure you I do not speak officially, but I am of the opinion that a troop invasion will be resented by millions of workers in the city. It might well result in a general strike."

"Evidently you do not consider the situation serious," commented the President.

"Interesting, but not as vital as the Governor would have us believe from his report. I do not question his veracity—but we have the opinion of only one man."

"My advice," said the Attorney General, "is that the President appoint a commission from Congress to study the entire situation and report to him. They can visit the city, make personal investigations and observations, and should have their report completed in one month—at the most, three months."

"Spoken like a true lawyer," growled the senior Senator. "A city is rapidly disintegrating and all he can suggest is a commission to report in from one to three months. If a house is on fire in a small town would the citizens ask a commission be set up of representatives of all the nation to investigate the cause of the fire and advise as to the best methods of putting it out? Or would they, lacking modern equipment, start a bucket brigade? The trouble with our government is we have too many commissions and too little action!"

"I agree with you fully," commented the President. "In the past I have been known to use the commission device but in this very real emergency we cannot wait—we must act! It seems to me the only pertinent question is what form that action should take. I had hoped that at this meeting you gentlemen might offer some concrete and workable suggestion. I am inclined to believe it is impossible."

"It will be impossible because some of us do not believe the situation demands either national action or consideration," said Abrams.

At that moment a presidential secretary entered, handing the President a telegram. His face was sober as he looked up at the watching men.

"Gentlemen," he spoke gravely, "this is a telegram from Police Commissioner McCarty, of New York. He is the gentleman who demanded that the Governor appoint him mayor to fill the vacancy caused by the untimely death of Mayor Van Horn. I will read it—it may force some of you to change your opinion."

"To the President of the United States:

I have reason to believe that the Governor of New York has either seen you or will shortly do so in regard to conditions in New York City. Trust you will take no hasty action as I have arrested, and am holding as hostages, twenty of the richest men in the city. If any military movement is begun these men will be executed without delay. All I wish at this time is to be mayor of this city. If I am so appointed I have full power to enforce law and order. I have nearly fifty-thousand men who will obey me. You may eventually capture the city but it will cost thousands of lives and millions of dollars. Punitive action may force the city to secede from the nation, becoming an independent government.

William McCarty,
Police Commissioner and
Acting Mayor of the City of
New York'."

Not a man moved or made a sound as the President finished reading the telegram.

Rising, the President said. "That will be all for today, Gentlemen. I assure you I will give this matter my most earnest and immediate attention. The decision I make, with following action, may be a very personal one. It may be right or it may be wrong: but one thing is certain: *This Union must and will be preserved.* It is better for one city to die than that the Union be destroyed. This telegram may be only a threat from a power-mad man, but it strikes at the heart of the nation. I will announce my decision very shortly. Good day."

17

HURD MADE HIS ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK just in time. Once outside the city his trip to Washington was uneventful. Registering at the Mayflower Hotel he secured clothing, opened a checking account and once more became a wealthy man of leisure instead of a hunted criminal.

For nearly twelve days he tried to rest but could not forget his troubles. Every day he carefully read the papers, clipping items about his home city and pasting them in order in a small scrap-book. He realized that this information was, in part, inaccurate but it was the best he could obtain.

Occasionally he visited with congressional representatives of New York

after dinner. He knew many of these personally, and they talked to him freely, far more so than they would have to a reporter. One evening he was surprised to have Senator Watkins call on him. The Senator's customary aplomb was lost in a decided agitation.

"It is a good thing you are not in the city," the old man said excitedly. "You can't even guess what Commissioner McCarty has done! Made prisoners of twenty millionaires and in a telegram to the President threatens to kill them if the National Government attempts to intervene. The President had a conference with some of us today in the White House. Governor Houton was there and told us the entire story. That is not the worst of it! McCarty is threatening secession. Mentioned the possibility of forming an independent government. Of course we were all pledged to secrecy but I just had to talk to someone—and I knew you would be interested."

"I think McCarty has gone mad!" was Hurd's comment.

"Perhaps; but that does not give us the answers. The President said he would consider the problem and announce his decision shortly. *He has to act*. No matter what he does there will be trouble and not only in New York."

"You mean with Congress?"

"Yes. If he sends in troops his motives will be questioned. If he does nothing he will probably be impeached. Some hothead in Congress will start endless orations. The West and South will wave the flag and demand war. Resolutions will be passed. You know how the boys play at patriotism."

"He is in a bad spot," agreed Hurd, "but he should move slowly."

"If he moves too slowly McCarty will think he is afraid of him and Congress will agree."

"I know the President," remarked Hurd. "We were classmates at Harvard. Do you think you could arrange an appointment for me with him? I may be able to give him additional information and valuable advice."

"I may be able to do it if it will help in any way. He is going to be a hard man to see till the crisis is over, but he may give you a few minutes. Suppose I call his office?"

After a brief conversation over the phone, the senator said, "Tomorrow at ten. His secretary says that no decision will be made before noon and probably not at all tomorrow."

Hurd's original appointment had been for fifteen minutes. Instead it lasted two hours. As a result the President made his decision. Conferences

were held with the Secretaries of the Army and Navy. Orders were given for troop movements and mobilization of the entire Atlantic Fleet, if necessary.

After secret consultations with their chiefs of staff, the Secretaries of Army and Navy notified the President that all movements could be completed in three days. Then and only then did the President announce his decision to deliver a special message to Congress on Saturday morning.

McCarty had expected an immediate reply to his telegram to the President. Thus, in his opinion, the prolonged silence meant that the threat to kill the twenty hostages had completely bluffed the President. He thought, "The old man will probably do something sometime, but in the meantime I'll get in so solid he will be too late."

On the twenty-third day of the XYZ reaction McCarty sat in the mayor's office, tired after a busy morning checking the list of those suspected of disloyalty, ordering their arrest and selecting men to replace those deposed. He had given interviews to the press; had talked with representatives of the twenty hostages and held conferences with district captains of police and General Peroni, ranking officer of the National Guard units, located within the city.

McCarty was well pleased with his new position and authority, but not satisfied when his subordinates called him 'Mr. Mayor'. The time would soon come when he would have a title more to his liking and more in keeping with his really exalted position. His dreams of what he would do when that time came were interrupted by his secretary rushing into the room declaring that the President was broadcasting.

"Turn on the radio," he commanded, "let's listen to the old man." Leaning back in his chair he lit a fresh cigar.

Not only the mayor was listening but the entire city and most of the nation. The President stated that this was a special message on the State of the Nation.

After the customary salutations the President spoke: "I come before you today with a message of deepest concern to all of us. Within the past few weeks, matters of increasing importance have occurred in the City of New York. Rioting by the impoverished; grafting by the police on a scale never before approached in our country; new religions promulgated in widely separated sections of the city involving peoples of all classes and races. Conflicts between these cults and peoples resulted in a three-day riot in which a large section of the city was burned and ravaged, with the loss of life to over a hundred-thousand citizens.

"These events culminated in the suicide of Mayor Van Dorn, after

which Police Commissioner McCarty installed himself in the mayoralty. He defied the Governor of New York, threatening him with death if he entered the city; he influenced the National Guard units of the city to refuse to obey the Governor's orders, declaring these would be armed resistance should the Governor or national government attempt intervention.

"To implement his threats, he has arrested twenty wealthy men, and in a telegram to me he said he would kill those men if I sent troops into the city. At the end of the telegram, he further said, and I quote his exact words: '*Punitive action on your part may force the city to secede from the nation, and set up an independent government.*'"

"After conferences with the cabinet and the members of Congress from the state of New York, I have decided to take whatever action is deemed wisest to check this rebellion. I, personally, have given this situation and the proposed solution and corrective much sober and prayerful consideration.

"Therefore, by virtue of the power vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, I hereby proclaim that a state of emergency exists in the City of New York; and I do, also, declare a state of blockade for the City of New York.

"Beginning at noon today, no person will be permitted to enter or leave the city, nor will there be any movement of foods or other supplies into the city. I have ordered the Army Chief of Staff to use sufficient troops, using the Regular Army, and whatever units needed to enforce this order. The Atlantic Fleet will support these troops.

"I consider this action necessary to curb rioting; prevent further loss of life; enforce law and order which the present officials seem either unable or unwilling to do.

"As soon as I am assured that a responsible government has been established, and the welfare of the city is assured, I will permit the movement of foods into the city and, as quickly as feasible, declare an end to the blockade. But, at all costs, the Union must and shall be preserved."

Loud cheers and much applause followed the President as he left the Senate chamber.

"NOW WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?" asked McCarty, to the very privileged few assembled in his office. "A blockade! He thinks he can starve us. Actually threatened me and you guys

back of me. Too late to do anything today. We will just sit tight. No comments. Keep them guessing.

"I will wait till Saturday and then we will have a parade. Police, Fire Department, National Guard, Societies, Labor Unions. It will be *Big!* I will make all the plans. I will give my people a holiday that will go down in history as the greatest celebration ever held. In years to come it will take its place with the 4th of July and Memorial Day. That last is good! *Damned Good!* It will be a day to remember—Memorial Day!"

"It takes a big man to think of such things, Mr. Mayor," exclaimed the new commissioner of police.

"And I am a big man!" replied His Honor. "Just about the biggest man since Caesar and Napoleon and Hitler. Send the managers of the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune* to my office at once. Arrest the men who own those papers. I have another idea. It is astonishing to me how fast they come. I don't even have to think about them."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the commissioner.

"I'll say it is," replied McCarty.

He worked feverishly at his desk perfecting his new plans, details of the parade and the broadcast to be delivered immediately after the parade. Visibly annoyed at the interruption he yelled at the two newspaper men brought to his office by the police, "Who are you? What do you want? Don't you see I am busy?"

"We represent the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*," said one of the men. "For no reason we know of we were arrested and brought here."

"I remember now! I sent for you. Stop your presses for the early edition of your papers and start printing this," and he handed them a page of manuscript. "Fill the entire paper just with this. Thirty on each page and the back of each sheet blank. Keep your presses rolling until I tell you to stop. As fast as they come off the presses hand them over to the men from the Bureau of Sanitation. They will have trucks ready."

The men looked the manuscript over. One said, bluntly, "We cannot do this, Mr. Mayor. This is illegal."

"You better do it. I have the owners of your papers under arrest. If I find you are not printing by four o'clock I will have them shot. Understand? Executed!"

"That would be murder, McCarty!"

"That is what you think. And don't call me McCarty. The title is Mr. Mayor and Saturday it will be something else—something more

dignified. You can go now—but remember, four o'clock is the deadline. I am in earnest if you refuse."

Late into the night McCarty held conferences and gave orders. His last talk was with General Peroni.

"How about your Guard units, General?" he asked.

"You can depend on them, Mr. Mayor. They will obey my command and I, as you know, will carry out all your orders. The Guard is furious over the President's threat of blockade. It means, in a few weeks, starvation for their families. And they love their families."

"And I love the people of New York!" exclaimed McCarty. "I feel as if I was Papa to every one of my people—even those who live in Brooklyn. That is the only thing that worries me, General—the fact you live in Brooklyn."

"Don't let that bother you any longer," said the general. "I moved to Manhattan yesterday. I felt that it was hardly proper for the ranking officer of the Guard to continue living in Brooklyn. Of course there are some fine people there, but after all . . . No use discussing it. From now on I live in Manhattan."

"That's fine. Now here is a general outline for the parade. You can fill in all the details. Start moving at ten Saturday morning. First the mounted police. Then ten convertibles. I will be in the first and the other nine will each have a member of my staff. Alongside each of us will be a surprise. Just wait and see!"

McCarty slept poorly that night. By Nine A.M. he was on his way to the new Temple of Love, carefully guarded by a detachment of motor police and followed by three empty convertibles. He entered the Temple with a few of his guards.

He had never visited the Museum. He knew about its transformation into the Temple of Venus. At its inception the entire program had been explained to him and met with his approval—after cash had been transferred from the new Directors to his very private safety deposit box. He had arranged with the new police commissioner for the daily collection of additional funds from the Temple and the satellite industries which had rapidly sprung up in that neighborhood.

But all this had poorly prepared him for what he saw inside the Temple. He was decidedly impressed by the marble Venus, the ferns, the odor of burning incense and the lovely votaries serving the Goddess of Love.

"This is better than burlesque," he said to himself, and then asked in a loud voice. "Who runs this joint?"

Mrs. Hurd came swaying toward him. Her semi-transparent robes served only to reveal her alluring beauty. "I am the high Priestess of Venus," she replied.

"Well! What do you know about that? Guess you know who I am? Mayor McCarty. Everybody knows me. So you are the dame in charge. All I can say is the Marble Girl hasn't anything on you. You have arms, Lady, and she hasn't. Bet you know what arms are for. Swell joint you have here. Fine lot of doll babies, and not paper dolls either."

"We are gratified by your visit, your Honor," purred the High Priestess. "What can we do for you? If you wish to worship the Goddess any of these lovely followers of Venus will be delighted to attend your pleasure."

"That will come later. I am going to have a parade Saturday morning. Everybody will be in it or watching it. Biggest thing in the history of the city. I am going to have nine of your girls ride with my Staff, and you are going to ride with me. Needn't bother to dress up. Come just as you are. Better put someone else in charge here because you won't be back—not for a long time. You and I can set up a Temple to Venus in my new Palace—after the parade."

A young man had been standing on one side of the room listening to the conversation. Now he stepped between McCarty and the High Priestess.

"You cannot do this," he exclaimed. "These ladies have dedicated themselves to the service of Venus. They cannot leave her Temple. If you force them to leave it would be duplicating the Rape of the Vestal Virgins."

"Whothell are you?" shouted the mayor.

"I am the High Priest. The lady to whom you are talking is my mother."

"So I can't take her and nine of these dames with me?"

"No!"

"That is what you think," said the mayor, as he roughly drew the Priestess to him.

"Take your unholy hands from my mother's arm," the young Priest commanded, moving toward McCarty menacingly.

"Stand back you young pimp, or I'll kill you."

Hurd refused to obey. McCarty drew his revolver, shot, and the Priest fell, dying, at his mother's sandaled feet.

"Bring them along," the mayor commanded the police. "Nine of the dolls and this lady."

AFTER THE BANKER HAD DISAPPEARED in the train Jeremy felt that the last tie connecting him with the past had been cut. Without much explanation he took his two companions from the New Yorker and obtained rooms in a very cheap hotel. At his suggestion Professor Jungers shaved off his beard and mustache, while the scientist simply stopped shaving and started to wear tinted glasses on the street. He advised Miss Kelly to wear the oldest and shabbiest of her dresses. He told them that he did not want anyone to recognize them as the rather distinguished trio of the New Yorker.

In a few days Gert Kelly lost her patience. She declared that they all looked simply *terrible*. The professor replied that he felt positively naked.

"I have never shaved," he added. "Since I was a very young man I have always worn a beard. I no longer recognize myself in a mirror."

Patting his shoulder sympathetically Gert tried to comfort him. "Look at me. A frowzy old woman. For some years I have been poor, I'll admit, but I was always well groomed. Talk about being disgusted! I need a permanent, but if it will help I won't even try to brush and comb my hair."

On Friday night, after the President's broadcast, she asked Jeremy, "I suppose we are all going to the parade tomorrow, John?"

"We certainly are. It should prove exciting and perhaps dangerous. I believe that before the day is over we will know McCarty's answer to the blockade."

"You do things so differently in America," exclaimed Jungers. "If a European city had so definitely defied the ruler of the nation, that city would have been captured and perhaps completely destroyed in a few days. But here nothing has happened."

"That is not completely correct," replied Jeremy. "Considering the size of the city the blockade was remarkably effective and in a very few hours. Not a ship has entered or left the Port. Automobiles and trucks have not gone through the tunnels or over the bridges. No trains are running. Air travel is dead. Mails from the outside have stopped. Life in the city goes on but no one has left or entered the city since the blockade began. We cannot say that nothing has happened. The entire city is isolated from the world. Even though not a shot has been fired *it means war has begun*."

"Will they city starve?" asked the professor.

"I do not think so. Naturally there will be a shortage of some items

of food, but there is probably enough staples to last two weeks or longer. By the end of that time something is certain to happen."

"Please stop talking food," interposed Gert. "It is hard enough to go without beefsteak without talking about it. Let's change the subject. I was down to the river this morning. The Fleet is in. It was good to see the Stars and Stripes again. Do you realize that our flag has disappeared from the city? Even from the Post Office?"

"Yes," sighed Jeremy. "Even the torch held by the Statue of Liberty has gone out. McCarty threatened all this but I honestly did not believe he would do it. We must see that parade and hear his broadcast. It may give us some of the answers."

The parade moved up Seventh Avenue, led by the mounted police who were using more than usual force to clear the street. Then a heavy armored unit of the National Guard followed by ten convertibles carefully guarded by motor cycle police. His Honor was in the first and nine of his officials in the others. Beside each man sat a beautiful woman in a thin white dress. McCarty paid as much attention to his companion as he did to the applauding spectators.

A band played an arrangement of *The Internationale*. Far down in the line of parade other bands were blasting the air with wild, barbaric music.

General Peroni led the rest of the National Guard Units. This section received a wild ovation. They were home town boys, proudly marching past their parents, wives, children and sweethearts. They had promised to die defending their city and their homes.

There was, so far, no flags; not a band had played an air either patriotic or well known, only that wild *Internationale* arrangement, and savage music from the far past.

The third unit was a peculiar one. First came equipment from the Fire Department and then twenty sanitation trucks in double file, heavily guarded by a detachment of infantry. On the top of each truck, securely chained, rode a millionaire hostage, dressed in dirty overalls. The Common People, from the curbstones, recognized them as symbols of their enemy, the rich of the city, and showered them with empty bottles and rotten vegetables. No effort was made to stop them by the large contingent of police which followed.

Now came a flag, the only one in the entire parade. It was carefully guarded by a very representative unit of police heavily armed. The all-white flag was furled. The people cheered. They did not know what that

flag was, what it meant, but at last they could cheer the colors. It was, they knew, *their flag*.

Delegations from all the Labor Unions with many bands vowed the working man's wholehearted support of the new movement.

"Everybody is here," whispered Jeremy to Gert.

At the end of the parade came twenty garbage trucks filled with newspapers. Sanitation workers were tossing these to the unruly crowd surging into the street. Fighting his way Jeremy was finally able to obtain a copy of the paper. Tucking it inside his shirt he wormed his way out of the crowd and found some degree of privacy on a side street. The doctor took the paper from its place of safety and opened it. Gert read it over his shoulder.

"Well! I'll be damned!" he exclaimed.

"Holy Cow! Me too!" agreed Kelly.

Again they joined the mob rushing towards the Mall. Fighting their way they fortunately found a bench. To obtain a better view of the bandstand they sat on the back of the bench. From there they could see troops massed to the rear and the sides of the stage. The mayor and his staff with the ten women sat in the front center. On his right was the furled flag. To the left front of the stage the twenty trucks were massed. At least the hostages, from their excellent position could see and hear everything, though they appeared to be dejected and uninterested.

Mayor McCarty's message was carried over loud speakers to the wildly enthusiastic audience. The radio broadcast it to the anxious nation.

He said: "A few days ago, the President of the United States thought fit to isolate our beloved city from the world. I have waited until today to answer his broadcast, because I wanted to be sure that my action would please the citizens of Greater New York. I have found them to be solidly united in their defiance of Washington's Old Man.

"Yielding to the popular demand, I hereby announce that from this time on we are no longer a part of the United States. A new star has risen in the sky. A new nation has been born— *The American Empire*.

"Our flag, which now will be unfurled, has, as you see, a red axe on a white field. The white field symbolizes the purity of our purpose. The axe shows our determination to resist all enemies and destroy our foes, even if it becomes necessary to make North America a bloodstained battlefield."

His voice was drowned in waves of hysterical applause. At last he was able to continue.

"The President of the United States has defied what is destined to be-

come the greatest empire in the world. I am now answering his insolent message to my people.

"Tomorrow, we will have a circus in the Yankee Stadium. I want as many of my friends to be there as the stands can hold. I promise you that it will be *some show*. Amusements, and lots of refreshments, and it will all be absolutely free. The radio and television will make the performance available to those who cannot join us there.

"If, by that time, the blockade of food is not lifted, and unless our people can move freely, then at that circus, these twenty rich men, foes of the Common People, now chained appropriately to garbage trucks, will be executed. And then, for every day of the blockade, twenty more like them will die, with their wives and children.

"A new empire needs a new currency. Today, this was distributed to you in the form of newspapers. Each sheet contains fifty ten-dollar bills. All you have to do is to cut the bills apart and spend them. Spend them freely for your pleasure, and demand United States currency for the change. I have given orders that if any salesman refuses to change the empire bills in this manner, you are to call for the police, and this enemy of our empire will at once be killed. If it seems necessary, I will have a million more bills printed in a few days. I want all of you, my dear friends, to be able to buy anything you want."

He paused. Several of his official staff surrounded him. Evidently, an argument was taking place. Shouts of "We want McCarty—we want McCarty!" arose from the troops. The cry was rapidly taken up by thousands from the audience.

At last His Honor waved for silence. The men talking to him took their seats. McCarty resumed his broadcast.

"A new empire must have a leader. I had hoped that, after the formation of this great nation, the people would permit me to retire to private life. I have no desires for greater honors. All I wish is to see my beloved city free to work out her own destiny. But my friends on the platform feel otherwise; and you, the Common People, the true rulers of this empire, agree with them.

"I cannot disregard your wishes. My duty to the Empire of America is greater than any personal desire. Therefore, I hereby proclaim myself the Ruler of the Empire of America, Emperor William the First."

The multitude burst into wild applause. Drums beat—horns shrilled. General Peroni took McCarty's right hand and, kneeling before him, kissed it.

"My Emperor!" he cried.

Waving his hand to the cheering thousands McCarty, very proud of himself, returned to his seat.

"That was wonderful," whispered the Priestess beside him.

"Just the beginning, Dear; just the beginning, and from now on you are going to share all my honors with me."

Jeremy and his two friends returned to their hotel.

"We have seen something very familiar today," commented the professor. "'Three times I offered him the kingly crown, three times he did refuse and yet they say that Caesar was ambitious'."

"It was clever acting, good theater," replied Jeremy. "All prearranged. We had no need to go back to old Rome. Similar tactics were used very recently in American politics."

"It is all very reminiscent of Hitler," sighed Jungers.

"Who was that dame with McCarty?" asked Gert.

"I do not know," answered Jeremy, "but some people near us said it was the High Priestess of the Temple of Venus."

"How appropriate."

"Very much so. First the wife of a millionaire; then the High Priestess, and now the royal consort of an Emperor."

20

IT WAS LATE BEFORE THE DOCTOR and his two friends finished the scanty supper Gert had prepared in her room. As Jeremy emptied his coffee cup he announced that, though he was very tired, he was going to investigate the night life of the city. He was certain there would be very interesting repercussions to the afternoon program on the Mall.

"May I go along?" asked Gert.

"No. I think it would be best for you and the professor to stay indoors. The streets will not be a safe place for a lady tonight. You two can write your reports and after that play Russian Bank. You can use the new currency to pay your gambling debts. For once you can play for big stakes."

Laughing, he left the room.

Three hours later he returned, and sank, exhausted, into a chair. His friends watched him anxiously, waiting for his report.

"It seems that everybody is out tonight," he volunteered at last. "Everyone dazed, intoxicated with excitement, the unusual warmth of early spring, suddenly acquired wealth—and liquor. Half of them are either drunk or doing their best to get drunk."

"Their reaction to the new currency is interesting. No one believes that it will hold its value. Everyone is trying to get rid of it as soon as they can—buy something tangible with it—no matter what the price is. They are buying—buying—buying—cheap, worthless merchandise. Everybody sober enough is carrying bundles.

"The merchants are wiser than McCarty thought they would be. They have raised their prices out of all proportion. Hardly anything is being sold for less than ten dollars, empire currency. Hawkers are selling the new flag for twenty-five cents in silver or a ten dollar empire bill. Nobody will change a bill. McCarty made an idle threat; even his police would be unable to kill fifty or a hundred thousand salesmen in a few hours."

"Was there any noticeable reaction to the new empire and Emperor?" asked Jungers.

"Yes—and no! On the street everyone is cheering. They seem to be strong for it. They are talking about the Circus tomorrow. Think McCarty is a big man. Say he has called the President's bluff. But I believe many thousands are in their homes—doors and windows locked—too dazed to express their opinion—just waiting for the next thing to happen and hoping that they will live for a few more days by which time the City might return to normalcy.

"Of course on the street you can hear anything. Lacking facts the people are spreading rumors that grow wilder every minute. For example the empire has already been recognized by various foreign powers who have promised to send help. Supplies are to be run through the blockade or dropped by parachute. Foreign troops have landed on the east point of Long Island. A foreign nation has threatened to drop an atomic bomb on Washington unless food is allowed to be moved into the city. Obviously none of these rumors are founded on fact, but they are being accepted eagerly by the drunken mob, and I suspect, by the average, sober but fearful citizens."

"If we are going to see that circus tomorrow, we better get some rest," suggested Gert. "Unless we get there early we won't have a chance to get inside."

After the broadcast, General Peroni, bowing low, said to McCarty, "May your humble servant have the honor of leading your bodyguard to your Palace, my Emperor?"

"Not a Palace yet," laughed McCarty. "But that will come. Now it is just an apartment on Fifth Avenue. But it will be very proper for you

to escort me, for you are in command of all the empire troops. Come one, Babe, let's go."

Taking the arm of the Priestess he led her from the stage of the band-shell to his waiting convertible.

At the door of the Apartment House, General Peroni helped the Priestess from the car and then asked for a few words in private with the Emperor.

"Sire," he whispered. "May I suggest, without offending, that you leave all your anxieties with me. You have had a busy day and may be even busier tomorrow. Just relax and have a good time. I will assume all responsibilities. Every detail for the circus will be arranged for according to your plans. If anything important happens I will at once contact you here. A guard of soldiers I can trust will protect your privacy."

"That's fine, General. You always know the right thing to do. Just keep in touch with me. Perhaps you better see me about midnight."

The Emperor disappeared inside the building with the Priestess.

General Peroni, with his aide, went at once to his own apartment. There he wrote for some time at his desk. Several sheets he burned in an ash tray. Finally what he wrote suited him. He folded the sheet several times, wrapped it in cellophane from several packages of cigarettes, and muttered, "That's done. I hope it works. It's the only thing I can do."

To Anderson, his aide, he said, "Lieutenant, you are going to carry a message to Garcia. We will go now and inspect the guard units. Perhaps it would be wise to visit the commissioner of police. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety. History is being made tonight. Failure on your part will be disastrous."

Some time later, above Seventy-second Street and the Promenade, a figure stepped from the shadows, slid under the railing and slipped noiselessly into the river. Giant searchlights from the anchored fleet made Riverside as bright as day, lined the Jersey coast and criss-crossed the sky. Nothing could escape detection in that brilliant light.

Under water most of the time, Lieutenant Anderson swam towards the Admiral's Flagship. Halfway from shore, he surfaced and heard the putt-putt of a motor-launch. He dived under the water. Coming to the surface he realized that his fears had been groundless for the boat was heading away from him, down stream. Treading water he waited till the sound became faint and then resumed his strokes.

Nearing the float moored alongside the battleship he was hailed by a lookout.

"A friend in distress," was his answer.

He grasped the side of the float. Hands reached out and dragged him out of the water.

"I must see the Admiral at once," he said. "I am Lieutenant Anderson. I carry a message from General Peroni, a message of the greatest importance."

He waited on the deck while a messenger went to the Admiral. He shivered from the cold, as well as from the excitement.

"Perhaps the messenger that called on Garcia was frightened," he said to himself, "but at least he had on something more than a pair of swimming trunks. Guess I don't look very much like a Lieutenant of the Guard."

The Admiral ordered a blanket for the shivering messenger. He read the message several times and then asked many penetrating questions. Anderson answered them truthfully and without hesitation.

"You better stay on the ship tonight, Lieutenant," he finally said. "If you tried to return you might be killed. We may be able to make other plans for you tomorrow."

"Thank you, sir," Anderson saluted, and then was taken to a cabin. There he was warm and comfortable—but he could not sleep.

At eleven that evening Captain Matthews of the United States Navy, with two junior officers, entered the city. They asked the first officer they met to take them to the nearest police station. Here they asked the captain in charge to have them escorted to Mayor McCarty.

"Evidently you don't know what happened today," the captain replied. "Do you mean the Emperor?"

"I mean Mayor McCarty."

"Better call him Emperor William. I don't think he wants to see you or anyone else at this time of night. Anything important?"

"Very much so. I carry a message to him from the President."

"That sounds interesting. I'll do some phoning and find out what the Emperor wants to do about it."

The Emperor was in his apartment. General Peroni and the commissioner of police were with him. They were making final plans for the circus. The Priestess, with several ladies from the Temple, were serving drinks.

The telephone rang. McCarty answered it.

"Send him up!" he finally shouted. Then to his guests he exclaimed,

"It's working. A guy from the Fleet is on his way. Says he is under a flag of truce. Guess the President is going to act sensibly and is willing to offer peace terms."

Fifteen minutes later the three naval officers were escorted into the apartment by a Police guard.

"Are you Mayor McCarty?" asked Captain Matthews.

"Hell! No! I am Emperor William."

"Then you are the one I want to see. I am Captain Matthews of the United States Navy. I carry a message from the President. It is very short. I have been instructed to read it to you."

"Sure. Go ahead and read it. What does the Old Man say?"

The naval officer read, "'To Acting Mayor McCarty: If you carry out your threat of killing the twenty hostages tomorrow, I have ordered the fleet to at once bombard the stadium. At the same time the troops surrounding the city will move in. Signed, Howard Denton, President of the United States.'"

McCarty laughed. "Now what do you know about that?" Turning to General Peroni he asked, "How many hostages do we have in the concentration camp, General?"

"About two thousand, including the women and children."

"Fine. In a little while we will have three more. Now I will write a reply to the President. Guess that blockade will let it through when they read it. Mark it *Rush*."

He wrote hurriedly and then read the answer aloud, "'To the President of the United States: Your threat to bombard the stadium tomorrow if twenty hostages are executed received. In the stadium I will have two thousand prisoners, rich men of the city and their families. With them will be the three naval officers you sent with your message. If stadium is bombarded, you will kill some citizens; but with them will die my hostages and your officers. Signed, William 1st, Emperor of the Empire of America.'"

"Now, General," he continued, "take these officers to the camp. Give them good seats tomorrow. Perhaps they better sit close to me, very close."

"I would remind you, Mr. McCarty," said Captain Matthews, very quietly, "that we came here under a flag of truce."

"So what?" asked the Emperor.

The President had decided to stay up all night. With a few of his Cabinet and the Secretary of War they were anxiously waiting for an answer to the ultimatum sent through the fleet. At midnight a telegram came. The President read it silently and then passed it over to his advisers. None offered any comment. At last the President spoke.

"This, gentlemen, has turned into the greatest poker game ever played. McCarty has apparently become insane, but is very far from being a fool. I still think that he is bluffing and he probably thinks I am. However, I have still a few hours to make a final and perhaps a fatal decision.

"To complicate matters; some hours ago I received a message from General Peroni. I will read it to you.

"'Mr. President: On my honor as a veteran of two wars and ranking officer of National Guard units located in this city I promise that no harm will come to the twenty hostages threatened with death tomorrow. Members of their families have supplied me with necessary funds to satisfy immediate monetary demands of soldiers and police hitherto loyal to McCarty. Entire armed force of city will obey my command when emergency arises. Believe that in a few days city will be completely under my military control, at which time will surrender to your troops without bloodshed. Will keep you informed regarding future events. Faithfully, General Peroni.'"

"How can he make such a promise?" asked one of the Cabinet.

"I do not know, but there it is. As I read it I recalled a statement made to me some days ago: At the time I thought it very improbable, but in a way, it harmonizes with Peroni's request for a few extra days without invasion of New York. Perhaps it would be wise to wait. We may win this poker game."

21

ALTHOUGH THE CIRCUS WAS NOT SCHEDULED to begin until noon the audience began gathering outside the stadium during the preceding night. By early morning lines extended from each gate for several blocks. These were constantly augmented by new arrivals who came on buses, subways and on foot. All were tired and sleepy but a hundred thousand patiently stood in line determined to see the unusual performance. Up and down the waiting lines men and boys went with baskets of sandwiches, pretzels, popcorn, milk and soft drinks, all of which were distributed without cost as the Emperor had promised.

At nine-thirty the gates were opened. The herd ran, pushed and trampled, each eager to obtain the best seat possible. In a short time all available seats were filled. A triple line of guards kept the field clear. Most of the grandstand remained unoccupied, to be filled later on by those fortunate enough to be given reserved seats.

Half holding, half dragging the professor, Kelly and Jeremy were swept along with the mob. They were fortunate enough to obtain seats high in the left field stand.

"Holy Cow!" exclaimed Gert trying to adjust her torn clothing.

"The show won't begin for some time. Perhaps we better try to take a nap; at least close our eyes," advised the Doctor.

"We left the hotel at three this morning," answered Jungers. "We will not return there till dark. It will be a long day. Already I am very tired."

Spontaneous fights, impromptu singing, bands playing the fantastic arrangement of the *Internationale*, hawkers selling the new flag, the cries of food distributors; all these blended in a discordant noise which was not sufficient to keep many people awake.

Just before noon a fanfare of horns and drums announced the appearance of the Emperor. The flag was raised. The people showed their pleasure with wild yells. The show had really begun.

With the Emperor were the three naval officers, General Peroni and the Priestess. McCarty, his staff and honored visitors, occupied ten boxes on the front row. Half of the grandstand back of them was filled with Guardsmen and police. Back of them, in the reserved seats, were favored supporters of the new empire.

McCarty gave a signal. Into the deep center of the field marched the two thousand from the concentration camp guarded by police. They were packed against the fence. Immediately howls of rage replaced the recent cheers. Pop bottles were hurled at the defenseless men, women and children.

The baseball teams, Giants and Dodgers ran on the field and without preliminary practice began the game, the first ball being thrown by the Emperor. A ball game was something everybody could understand and enjoy. It was a contest long to be remembered. Brilliant pitching—spectacular fielding—home runs—game tied at 3-3—at the end of the ninth inning.

The Emperor turned to Peroni who sat behind him. "This is a good place to stop," he said. "We do not want the rest of the program delayed."

The general gave the necessary order ending the game. The spectators wildly booed stopping the game without a decision. Their anger was checked by the rapid erection of a platform in the center of the field. It did not take long for them to realize its purpose.

"We are going to have a prize fight," Jeremy whispered to Gert.

"Holy Cow!" she replied.

The fight between "Butcher" Goebing and "Slugger" Baer, two heavy-weights, lasted only three rounds. The "Butcher" seemed determined to land on his back as often as possible and stay there as long as he could.

"Kill the bum!" shouted the mob.

"Not a bad idea, General," exclaimed the Emperor.

"Let him live, my Emperor. There will be enough blood shed before the day is over."

A wrestling match came next. "Gorilla" Pete, three hundred pounds climbed into the ring followed by "Panther" Bill, weighing twenty pounds less but six inches taller. Over the microphone the referee introduced them, and announced that it would be a fight to the finish and no holds barred. The audience roared their delight and settled back to see the battle of the antideluvians.

For some minutes the conflict seemed equal. Then the "Gorilla" bit off the "Panther's" left ear. The "Panther" retaliated by breaking his adversary's right ankle. The "Gorilla" looked worried as he hobbled around the ring. Suddenly he seized his opponent and hurled him to the floor. The "Panther's" shriek of pain could be heard above the bellowing of the crowd.

"What happened?" asked the Professor.

"Not sure," Jeremy replied, "but through my field glasses it seemed the 'Gorilla' has blinded the 'Panther.' Probably gouged out his eyes. I think that will be the end of the fight."

"Men are so cruel," remarked Gert, bitterly.

But it was not the end. The crazed, blinded wrestler managed to get his hands around his opponent's throat, a hold that was only ended when death freed the "Gorilla."

"They certainly play rough here," commented the professor.

The wrestlers, dead and alive, were carried from the ring in none too gentle manner. The mob, having tasted blood, howled for more.

The twenty hostages were driven to the prize ring and forced to kneel, hands tied behind them. Back of each rich man stood a National Guard officer with drawn automatic.

The Emperor rose. For the first time the stadium was silent. He spoke through a microphone. Amplifiers carried his message to every part of the stadium. The radio took it to the city and nation.

"My Friends! Yesterday I promised you that if the President of the United States did not obey my command to lift the blockade, these twenty

men would pay with their lives for his insolence. As you know, the Old Man has continued to defy your Emperor.

"Now these twenty miserable wretches, who for so long, with others of their kind, have made slaves of us all, are going to receive the punishment they deserve.

"They have talked of humanity and freedom, but their constant ambition was to crush the Common People beneath their iron heels.

"I do not need to tell you of the dirty tenements they made us live in, while they lived in gilded palaces. You know too well how hunger often forced you to eat the food their servants threw into garbage cans. All of you have had to work weary hours at starvation wages, while they spent their time playing at Bar Harbor or Florida.

"Patiently, through long years, we have stood their tyranny. Now the time has come when they will feel our long-repressed hatred.

"In a few minutes, I will raise my hand in the new salute of our nation; then these enemies of the Empire of America will die.

"This will be my answer to the President's ultimatum. I cannot yield to him. There is nothing for me to do but to dare him to carry out his threats. I bravely stand between him and my beloved people. Long live the Empire of America!"

Everyone in the stadium rose to their feet, cheering, yelling, waving the new flag, crowding for a better view.

"Bill! Bill!" cried the Priestess, as she threw herself on the Emperor with such force that he fell backward on a seat. "Peroni is going to—"

The bark of Peroni's revolver was echoed by those of the Guard officers in the other nine boxes. In a few seconds McCarty's loyal staff lay dead around their slain Emperor.

The twenty officers, a few seconds before destined to be executioners, raised the hostages to their feet and untied their hands. The crowd slumped silently to their seats, too stunned for expression.

"My God!" exclaimed Gert.

"Peroni pulled a fast one," whispered Jeremy.

"The man took lessons from Hitler," remarked the professor.

General Peroni stepped over the body of McCarty to the microphone. Everyone in the nation, city and stadium heard his message.

"Citizens of the Empire of America. Without your knowledge, and certainly without your consent, your former Emperor placed all of you in a position of greatest peril. He was a traitor to the empire, a menace to our common safety. Only by his death could we be saved from a

terrible disaster. I cannot give you the details now. You simply have to have faith in me and believe that I am telling you the truth."

From the guards, from the police, came shouts: "We want Peroni! We want Peroni!" The mob, caught by the contagion, joined in the demand.

The general waved for silence, and then continued. "The National Guard and police—the armed forces of this empire—have selected me to be their Emperor. I am glad that the citizens seem to agree. From now on, I rule. There will be order in the city. No more wild drinking, no more rioting, no more looting of our stores by the spending of bogus money. I will help you in every possible way, but you must assist me in maintaining order. And now I proclaim myself the Emperor Peroni."

"The king is dead. Long live the king!" shouted the Guard.

"This will be a day to remember," whispered Jeremy.

"It seems to me that this general is boss," commented Jungers.

"Holy Cow!" exclaimed Gert. "What a story! I can hardly wait until I start on the portable."

The new emperor looked down at the body of McCarty. "I am sorry," he said to himself, "that the woman died with him. That was certainly not part of my program. I knew Mrs. Hurd and her husband in the old days—before the city became intoxicated."

22

EMPEROR PERONI REALIZED THAT, in spite of the wild cheers following his assumption of authority, there were various factions which would have to be handled firmly but with very definite official tact.

He knew that he would have the full support of the wealthy, for the condemned hostages had been saved. He had also promised that the prisoners in the concentration camp would at once be returned to their homes. In his proclamation he had left no doubt that rioting would be checked and all property rights respected. Those who had contributed to the two million dollar security fund would feel, for the time being, that they had received full value for the investment.

This money had been lavishly distributed to the National Guard and police. Peroni had kept none of it, but had made an honest effort to be certain that even the newest private or policeman had his share. He was not at all sure that certain officers had not kept more than belonged to them. Just how long this bribe would induce his armed forces

to remain faithful was difficult to determine. He knew that it was very possible that the ambitions of some other official might easily lead to his own sudden death.

He was not worried about the common people or even about the politicians. Martial law had been immediately enforced; the streets would be kept clear; a nine o'clock curfew had been ordered; his Guard units, scattered through the city, could, with the aid of the police, keep the populace under control; his order closing all taprooms, hotel bars and liquor stores would halt further intoxication of the city.

All that night he worked at his desk in the mayor's office. After giving the necessary orders to the ranking Guard officers, he appointed a committee of leading citizens to survey the food situation, secure supplies and set up food distribution centers. This committee, some of whom were rescued hostages, worked rapidly and efficiently. By morning, over twenty kitchens were operating in the poorer sections of the city, serving breakfast to the hungry. The Red Cross, members of the old U.S.O. and many volunteers aided in this work and in another twelve hours the twenty food centers had expanded to fifty.

All that night, as he worked, Peroni had Captain Matthews and his two aides sit in on all conferences as observers. They heard all his verbal orders and read all his written ones. When daylight came he told them, privately, that he was going to send them back to their ship and requested that in return a certain officer, now being held by the Navy, be permitted to re-enter the city.

"Gentlemen," he finally said. "You have seen everything that has happened since you came here. You know my future plans in detail. The explanation of these events—the reason for the utter madness of the city during the last month is as difficult for you to understand as it is for me to explain. I know that the city is still very sick. The action of the Guard when they made me Emperor was not a sham. They were in earnest. Most of them feel that the Empire of America is something very real and desirable. If I told them what I really think about it they would kill me. The only way I can keep order is to go along with them and act as their Emperor.

"I want you to see the President. Tell him everything. Please give him this message. *'Wait a few days longer until I can determine how the city reacts to martial law, and whether my troops will continue to obey me. If possible will surrender the city in a few days and thus prevent bloodshed. If I remain alive, will keep in daily communication with you.'*"

"You are a brave man, General," replied Captain Matthews, "but you are sitting on an atomic bomb."

"I know that. Thanks for your courtesy; and now good-bye. I have a busy day ahead of me."

As he prepared at nine that morning to leave the office on an inspection of the city, his secretary called him saying that a doctor wanted to see him.

"May be a crank." Peroni replied, "Search him and send him in."

"Not a crank, and he is not armed."

"O.K. I will give him five minutes."

The visitor said, "I am Dr. Meador, sir. For years a psychiatrist, a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. As physician and psychiatrist I would like to talk to you about the health—or rather the lack of health in this city."

The doctor's effect was that of utter weariness and dejection. His strained, tense voice added emphasis to his appearance.

"Sit down, Doctor. You look tired. I agree with you that the health of the city is very important. Food kitchens are already in operation."

"I saw them; in fact had breakfast at one this morning. Good food and the people seemed to appreciate it. Now to the point. As you know our hospitals are unable to care for the countless insane of the city. No one knows the number of psychotics without care."

"I realize that, Doctor; but what has the medical profession done about it? Some weeks ago a Committee from the A.M.A. was here investigating the epidemic of insanity. I read their report. They had nothing vital to suggest either in diagnosis or treatment. McCarty showed me their suggestions. He was specially amused at the minority report of the female psychanalyst. I remember that he laughed when he said, 'She thinks she can cure them in five years. In five years the whole country will be nuts.' Seriously, Doctor, have you any suggestions?"

"I read that report, General. In fact I helped prepare the majority portion. As you know, the medical profession, nurses, hospitals are completely demoralized. Many of us have done our best but it has been a very discouraging month. McCarty was unsympathetic—refused to supply us necessary funds. In fact he went as far as to order us to kill a hundred thousand of the worst patients, but we refused to obey him.

"At present there are not more than four thousand physicians and nurses in the entire city that we can depend on, and these faithful few are just about exhausted.

"Now for my advice! Your commissioner of health was killed yesterday. Appoint the best man you can find to fill that position. Furnish him ample funds and unlimited authority. Order him to set up emergency hospitals in every hall, school house, any large, vacant building. Staff each emergency hospital with at least one doctor, one nurse and as many volunteer nurses as we can obtain. We need more beds at once. If the situation does not improve in a few days we will have use for many more."

"That is good advice, Doctor. How would you like me to appoint you? You seem to have a definite program, even though you admit that you have no diagnosis. In fact, I am not going to wait for your acceptance or refusal. You are appointed. I will give you full authority and all the money you want. Report to me every day."

The Emperor toured the city for two hours, talking with Guard and police officers and inspecting the food kitchens. On his return to City Hall he read the reports accumulated during his absence. There had been some minor disturbances, all quelled without evident brutality. It appeared that his skillful bribery and military manner had impressed the armed forces and they were doing their best to quiet the excited people who did not know what to expect next. The sale of liquor had been stopped, and, on the previous night, there had been little trouble in enforcing the nine o'clock curfew. It seemed that the people were exhausted and willing to go to bed early.

During the next two days the city became almost quiet. The general felt that he had the city under control.

Early on the morning of the third day he was wakened by the ringing of his telephone bell.

"Sorry to call at this time, General. This is Dr. Meador reporting."

"Yes, Doctor. Go ahead. Anything new?"

The general listened for nearly five minutes without speaking.

Then he replied, "That sounds serious. Open up your emergency hospitals at once. Commandeer food, bedding, supplies from every hotel and restaurant. I will order every city automobile to assist the hospital ambulances. Put every volunteer nurse's aid to work. Make a note of anyone who refuses to help and assist the hospital ambulances."

Sitting on the edge of his bed, Peroni rubbed his unshaven chin, his eyes serious and questioning.

"God have mercy on us!" he exclaimed. "Thousands of people dying on the streets. No telling how many inside the buildings—some may never

be found. It can't be starvation. There has been enough food to prevent that. What can it be?"

He called the Resident Physician of Bellevue over the phone.

"This is the Emperor speaking. Dr. Meador has just phoned me that people are dying like flies on every street. Have you had many brought in, Doctor?"

"Yes. More than we can handle. Rich and poor. A number of soldiers and police. That is not the worst of it. Our attendants, cooks, orderlies, some of the nurses are showing the same symptoms—suddenly drop asleep, even shock treatment does not help. Just lie in a coma—weak pulse, shallow breathing. May be an epidemic of encephalitis; too early to tell."

"Have you word from other hospitals?"

"Yes. Same condition all over the city."

"Too bad. Do the best you can. I am calling for volunteers to help. You might ask Dr. Meador for help though I doubt that he can do much for you if the condition is as bad as you say it is. Thanks for your report. Goodbye."

When Dr. Jeremy went for the morning paper he noticed that the hotel night clerk was sleeping. Several bellboys were also asleep. On the street in one block he passed a policeman, two taxi drivers and five working men unconscious on the pavement. He examined three of the very quiet people, counted their pulse and respiration, tried to rouse them by pressing on the eyeball.

"It looks like it," he whispered. "It looks very much like it! Eight million white mice have started to fall into the deep sleep. Eight million sleepers! I wonder how many there will be awake to take care of them?"

He turned to the hotel. Gert had prepared breakfast for the three of them.

"Any news?" she asked.

"Not in the papers. In the city, very important news. I believe that this is going to be, for a few days, a very quiet city." He gave in detail his examination of the sleepers.

"Before the end of another twenty-four hours we will know how many are affected with this new symptom. The city has been wild, mad, a bedlam of mixed noises. Now it may become very quiet. This seems to be the end of the crisis. I do not know which will be worse. Eight million irresponsible psychotics, or eight million in a deep coma."

"Surely not eight million?" asked the bewildered Professor.

"Just wait and see. I think that I have seen something like this before, only on a very small scale. Perhaps they will recover—perhaps some day the city will return to its normal hurley-burley, which, after all, has made New York the biggest, busiest, merriest city in the nation."

"When the blockade is lifted I am going to get out of here as fast as I can," exclaimed Gert. "For once in my life I have had all the news my nerves or nose can stand. There is a ranch in Montana—"

"We have heard about that ranch very often," commented Jungers. "I would like to be there with you, Gert. I also long for peace and quiet. I had hoped that I might find it here in America. Instead it has been a repetition of those dreadful years in Europe. Violence—murder—avarice—the lust for power. Each succeeding tyrant cheered and kissed and then in turn killed by a new tyrant. Perhaps on Gert's ranch we might find peace."

"What ranch are you people talking about?" asked Jeremy.

For a few hours every new sleeper was taken to some hospital. By noon every bed was filled. By night all that could be done was to lay them in fairly orderly rows on the sidewalks or in the parks. The workers were exhausted, the medical profession baffled and helpless. Ninety per cent of police and Guardsmen had joined the sleepers, but their services were neither needed nor missed. For a while the authorities attempted to tabulate the number of new cases, but this soon ceased to be of interest. It was finally estimated that over eight million people dropped into the death-like coma during a three day period.

The doctors had no logical explanation. Blood tests, neurological examinations failed to show any cause. Medical literature failed to help. It was a disease affecting millions, but many of the workers, constantly exposed to it, remained well. If it was a contagious disease then all that could be said was that the incubation period was a long one. It was a coma that looked like approaching death *but no one died*.

"If we could have an autopsy, just one," observed a tired doctor to a tired interne, "we might know more about it."

The professor and Gert worked in a small hospital near the Hotel. Doctor Jeremy volunteered for service at Bellevue. There he soon attracted attention for his gentleness, efficiency and evident long medical experience. Never obtruding he spent his days and night among the patients, examining, giving medicine, observing. He was the only doctor who remained an optimist.

"Give them time," he remarked again and again. "Give them time and they will recover."

But he refused to explain the basis for his opinion.

At noon on the third day of the death-like sleeping of the city, General Peroni sent a message to the President through the Admiral of the Fleet.

"To the President of the United States: I wish to report that approximately eight million of the people in New York are in a deep sleep, cause of which so far has not been determined by our physicians. They state that most of the patients may die. Ninety-five percent of Guard, Police and Firemen affected. Those not ill loyal but incapable of maintaining order if looting starts. Request that you move troops and all available medical service and supplies into the city at once. Since most of the population are in coma there can be no resistance. I will at once surrender to designated authority. Signed Peroni."

By two that afternoon troops moved into the city. The Medical Department, after brief consultation with Dr. Meador, assumed control of the so-called epidemic. Martial law was declared and Peroni, with those of his staff who were awake, were arrested, charged with treason. The Empire of America was dead.

In spite of his complete fatigue Dr. Jeremy could not leave the wards. He was confident that in a few hours the first sleepers would react in one of two ways—either recover or die. Rapidly reading the hastily written bedside notes he selected one of the first sleepers brought to the hospital.

She had a beautiful name, Mary Accaro, and had been carried to the ward by her husband who had refused to leave her bedside. For three full days he had sat by her bed, watching and waiting. Dr. Jeremy sat on the other side of the bed, fingers on Mary's pulse, watching her face.

Suddenly he saw what he had been waiting for. Her eyelids moved, she took a deep breath, and, turning her head slightly, looked at her husband.

Jeremy was prepared. He gave her a cup of hot coffee, saturated with sugar. She drank it and dropped into a natural sleep.

"She will live," Jeremy whispered to her husband.

The doctor walked around the room. Other sleepers were rousing from their coma, but Dr. Jeremy was more interested in something else; he had work to do, very important work.

After three hours of sleep Mary woke, this time to realize that her husband was holding her hand. In the bed, in the cradle of her arm, slept her baby.

Other babies were born to other women in New York that day but this one seemed very important to Jeremy.

It was a new baby in a new city.

A symbol of the resurrection.

Satisfied that his experiment had come to an end, Jeremy returned to the hotel and, without undressing, slumped on his bed.

Gert came into his room with coffee. "Anything new, John?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "Mary Accaro has a fine boy baby."

She took his hand. "Was she one of the sleepers?"

"Yes. One of the first to recover. The city is saved. Now I am going to sleep."

23

A BIG BLACK CAR TURNED OFF the Montana highway onto a prairie road, poorly defined and pocked with chuck-holes. The mountains in the distance promised cool refreshment after the dust and heat of the semi-desert.

"If Jeremy wanted privacy he certainly has it," mused Hurd, as he bumped along in low. "Hope no springs break on this blasted road."

As he approached the rambling ranch house set in a circle of cottonwoods he drove through a large, well arranged garden of cactus of all sizes, shapes and colors. Just beyond in a well irrigated garden grew masses of wild flowers, lupine, daisies, columbine and many others that Hurd could not identify.

Driving into the door yard he saw a white-bearded old man sitting on the porch looking dreamily at the mountains.

"Hello." Hurd hailed. "Does Doctor Jeremy live in this paradise?"

"He certainly does. He and his wife and myself, and no one else within ten miles."

"Then you must be Professor Jungers."

"Yes—but I no longer use the title of professor."

"I am Hurd, the banker, from New York. Perhaps you remember me?"

"Yes—in a former life. It seems far away and long ago. Come on in, won't you?"

The banker sat down on the edge of the porch. "Nice place you have here. Don't see many cattle, though."

"No. We don't raise cattle. No livestock except a few horses and some

white mice the Doctor has in his laboratory."

"Experimenting?"

"Looks like it. He does not talk much about it."

"Then you just live here?"

"No. Not exactly. We have built up a good business. We gather wild flower seeds and cactus and sell them. Of course it is a mail order business. It is very peculiar, Mr. Hurd. We have customers from all over the country buying our seeds. I am sure some of them grow, and the gardeners brag about them to their neighbors. Wild flowers from the Wild West. Maybe it makes them feel like pioneers. No doubt it is a symbol to them."

"Looks as though the doctor is not home."

"No. He and Gert left this morning. You see every now and then he becomes depressed and then his wife takes him out seed hunting. They will be back before dark. Better bring your baggage in. We have a room ready for you."

"A room specially for me?"

"Yes. When we came here, John said, 'We will fix a bedroom for Mr. Hurd. Someday he will visit us and we want him to be comfortable.'"

The afternoon passed. Jungers started to prepare supper. Hurd sat in a rocking chair on the porch and thought—just thought. The peace and calmness of the country filled his mind and soul.

About sunset Gert and Jeremy rode up, evidently tired but happy.

"Find any seeds, Doctor?" asked the banker as he strolled over to them.

Jeremy, still in the saddle, looked down at his friend. "Well! If it isn't Mr. Hurd. I knew you would come sometime. Did Jungers show you your room? You know Gert?"

"Yes. We must have met back in New York. Congratulations to both of you! I always had the idea you two had designs on each other. The professor has supper all ready. I am certain you are as hungry as I am."

The conversation during supper and the cool hours of the early evening was mainly about the ranch, the seed business, Hurd's trip west and the local gossip about the neighbors in the next house, miles away.

After breakfast Jeremy took Hurd to the laboratory.

"Still a scientist," remarked the banker as he glanced over the glassware and the little white mice in immaculately clean cages.

"Yes. I am working on a new experiment."

"Fine! But don't ask me to help you finance this one."

"We may take that up later," said Jeremy, with a twisted smile. "How were things in New York when you left?"

"Everything is rapidly returning to normalcy. Harlem is being built up with modern and comfortable housing units. New hospitals are under construction. Salaries of doctors and nurses have been raised. The very best of the medical profession are on the staffs.

"Of course the return to the old conditions in the city did not take place overnight. It took many days for some of the sleepers to return to work.

"You wrote me that you left the city very soon after the blockade was lifted. Perhaps you do not realize the intense international interest this city crisis had for your profession. Doctors and psychiatrists have written dozens of books about it; but all admit that they are ignorant of the actual cause of the sickness or the reason for the recovery."

Jeremy smiled wryly as he commented, "Only two people know the real facts about the Eight Million White Mice dropping into the Abyss."

"And I am confident they won't talk," continued Hurd. "It was fortunate you insisted on my going to Washington. I was able to give the President personal observations and a few suggestions which he said were helpful. He was in a very difficult position. For some days it looked as though he might be impeached, but now he is stronger than ever, and will probably be reelected."

"I heard Peroni cleared himself," said the doctor.

"Yes. He was able to show that he supported the Federal Government in every way he could and still save his own life. As a result he has become a national hero. Hundreds of the Guard and police were arrested after they woke from their sleep but they, like all the sleepers, had complete amnesia; reliable witnesses were few, therefore the charges against them were dropped. The medical opinion was that all had been sick with the same, unidentified disease. So the experiment is ended."

"Yes. They all showed, the same cycle of behavior exhibited by my Labrador patients."

Hurd paused and then said very gravely, "John, we played with destiny. We experimented with eight million mice. Just what was accomplished?"

"Simply this. We artificially produced a sociological condition frequently recorded in history. We may assume that at various times from some unknown cause, the peoples of entire nations had a mass production of the Chemical XYZ. The leaders arose, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler. They had little difficulty swaying the drugged masses."

"For the sake of the argument suppose we admit this is the truth instead of a hypothesis," said Hurd. "What can we do about it?"

"That is what I am working on. For every poison there is an antidote. Here in my laboratory I am trying to find something that will prevent the action of XYZ. If I do—"

"Then what?"

"Perhaps it could be used to prevent future wars."

"How?"

"Back of all the wars of the past there was an underlying poverty and hunger. Take the Balkans. Today half the people there are starving. Perhaps malnutrition is a basic cause for mass XYZ production. To these hungry people we could send food, especially flour, the staff of life. Give those people flour and they will make bread and eat it."

"We have done that before but it did not stop wars."

"But this time the food will contain the antidote for XYZ, and the masses, even the rulers, will not be affected."

"John Jeremy, I think that you have always been a dreamer. Perhaps this time your dream may mean world peace. During many years we have spent billions for aid and to institute movements and house organizations to prevent war. Perhaps it might be more logical to spend some money to feed the hungry medicated food. They might be more eager to live peacefully and cultivate their lands than to make the world a parched desert strewn with the bones of slaughtered millions. How far have you progressed with the experiment?"

"Far enough to know that it works with my white mice."

"How about trying it on human mice?"

"I do not dare. I thought that I was a hard boiled scientist. Deliberately I plunged millions into the abyss of the subconscious, a living hell. But I went with them, Hurd—and it was a more terrible hell for me—because I made it. Never again will I go there, dragging humanity with me into that chasm filled with demons of past ages."

"But what are you going to do with this new experiment?"

"I am keeping complete notes. Someday there will be a young man, brave enough to carry on my work, foolish enough to think that one man can lift all men toward the stars. If he succeeds he can have all the glory. If he fails all I can do is pity him."

"Are you doing any other medical work?" asked Hurd.

"Yes. I am writing a paper which I hope to read before the American Psychiatric Society. Without divulging our experiment I will show that

the New York crisis was caused by a mass dropping into the subconscious.

"I intend to prove the dangers of exploring, releasing the horrors that lie in the abyss and warn the psychoanalysts not to dig too deeply into that part of the psyche. I will compare the subconscious to a pile of manure. Dug into, turned over, it is offensive to the eye and nose. It is decayed and unhealthy. How much better to leave it undisturbed and simply grow violets on its surface."

"That sounds sensible. Do you need any help with your ranch and seed business, John? I am not very enthusiastic about helping you with your psychiatric experiments. You cannot blame me for that. The last one we worked on together was rather costly to me. Of course the money I spent did not affect me. I have lost as much in one day on the Stock Market. You know about my family—including poor Perkins. Guess I miss him more than I do the others. Saw more of him, you know. But I have learned to live without him. Strange at first to select your own neckties but after I became used to it, I liked it."

Jeremy looked at Hurd's tie. "I am certain," he said, "that Perkins would not have approved of the one you are wearing."

The four gathered around the dinner table. Gert told about the development of the mail order business in seeds and cactus. Jüngers was enthusiastic about a new wild flower which he thought would have sales value if properly described in the catalogue. Jeremy said that the day before they had found a deposit of small but very handsome stones. They might be sold in bulk to some filling station on the highway for the tourist trade.

Hurd listened thoughtfully and then turned to Gert.

"Mrs. Jeremy, I am delighted to find you and my friend so happily married. It must have been an unusual romance. How did it happen? John was so busy with his scientific experiments that I never thought he would have time for courting."

Gert laughed, "I guess I was in love with him from the first time I saw him. I believe he was in love with me also, from the first day. But we were both busy and worried, so the idea stayed in our subconscious for a long time."

"My Dear," exclaimed her husband. "Please don't ever use that word *subconscious* again."

Inquisitions

SELECTED LETTERS II 1925-1929

by H. P. Lovecraft
(Edited by August Derleth and
Donald Wandrei)

Arkham House: Publishers, Sauk
City, Wisconsin 53583; 1968; 359pp.
plus preface; \$7. 50.

I wonder if any of us who knew him or were acquainted with him, however briefly, through letters have ever fully recovered from the shock of Howard Philips Lovecraft's death, at the tender age of 47, in March 1937. My own correspondence with him was of the briefest—two letters, the last reaching me in February, 1937. At any event, when the first effects of the shock wore off, two of HPL's long-standing friends who were also authors got together on the project of publishing not just a "memorial volume" but the entire corpus of Lovecraft's fiction, and a selection of his letters. The fiction would encompass two volumes, they calculated, and these would be large volumes; a third, of equal size, would contain the selected letters.

Not that August Derleth and Donald Wandrei were the only two who were desirous of rendering such a combined tribute to a loved friend and service to American letters, however restricted the field in which Lovecraft wrote; but as it turned out,

they were in the best position to do so, whatever difficulties and personal sacrifices were entailed. In 1939, the first volume, *The Outsider and Others*, appeared under the aptly chosen new imprint, Arkham House. And despite the very slow response to this book (although I do not think that Derleth allows sufficiently for the depressed financial condition of many Lovecraft fans in 1939; \$5.00 was just beyond my means, then—and in fact, even the generous pre-publication discount, offering it to me at \$3.50, left it too steep), the second volume, *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*, appeared in 1943.

The years went by; Arkham House slowly made its way, bringing out other collections of Lovecraftiana and much other excellent material, all in uniformly well-made editions, and I'm sure I was not the only one to wonder if the selected letters project had been abandoned. The task of collecting and transcribing these letters was far greater than any of us (perhaps even Derleth and Wandrei, who had become adept at reading HPL's spidery script) appreciated. And printing and productions costs mounted constantly; a single volume which would do justice to the editor's intent soon left the realms of possibility altogether. Even if the small type used in the first two volumes (and many found it necessary to employ a magnifying

glass in reading them, even back in the early 40s, when we were all younger than I enjoy remembering (at times) such a volume would be priced right out of the market.

Finally, in 1965, the first volume appeared, 362 pages in a good size type, containing the first 178 of the letters selected, and covering the years 1911-1924. The originally-announced price had to be upped, but we certainly received our money's worth at \$7.50. I eagerly looked forward to volume two, learning in the meantime that four, rather than three volumes would be required, partly because of the acquisitions of many more letters, in recent years, in addition to the constant difficulties and delays that beset all publishers, and which may be more onerous on a part-time publisher, as Mr. Derleth is.

The new volume reached me on a day when I had not despaired of survival after two weeks of the worst cold I can remember—but rather was fearing that I'd live with it for another twenty years or more; and the package from Arkham House could not have been a better timed inducement for my continued interest in and attachment to Earthly existence. This volume contains letters 179-359, February 16, 1925 to June 16, 1929, addressed to such well-known names in the weird field as Frank Belknap Long, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Donald Wandrei, Zelia Read Brown (Bishop), Vincent Starrett, and Farnsworth Wright. Those who have read Arkham House's other Lovecraftiana, or have volume one, will be acquainted with many of the other names; and some of the most interest-

ing letters are to people whom you may never have heard of before.

The contents pages, as with volume one, not only list the number, recipient, and date of each letter, but also give a brief summary of subject matter—something I have found very helpful.

In the introduction to the first volume the editors noted: "Very likely Lovecraft would have revised and altered his letters extensively if he had foreseen their publication. We have made no alterations or changes in the text reproduced. We present them here as he wrote them . . ." Notwithstanding, Mr. Derleth informs me he has received some letters charging him with "censoring" some of the letters in the second volume, in particular #246, to James F. Morton, Nov. 17, 1926, which appears on page 91, and in which you will see several blank spaces filled by long dashes. These, Mr. Derleth tells me, were in the original; and the text of the letter alone would make this obvious, even if I did not trust Messers Derleth and Wandrei to keep faith with their printed promises—as I do trust them. HPL did not hesitate to use a "god damn" when warranted, but there were occasions when no gentlemanly cussing was entirely adequate; and here he did what I have seen numerous other writers do—indicated inexpressible oaths with dashes, the reader invited to supply his own imprecations. He is speaking about the iniquities of certain printers, persisted in even after he had corrected proofs five times; obviously, his full feelings could not have gone through the mails in 1926! So much for the question of "censorship"; there has been none.

I cannot imagine anyone wanting to start with volume two, so long as volume one is available, so let me assure the reader that it can still be obtained from Arkham House; and it isn't, I can virtually guarantee, going to appear in a low-priced soft-cover edition six months, or a year, after you've laid out \$7.50 for the hard-cover printing.

(I have enough confidence in the above prediction to offer to make up the difference to any reader who, taking my advice above, comes across a less expensive soft-cover edition presenting the full text of the hard-cover edition by September 1, 1969.)

While I certainly cannot go along with any suggestion that the Lovecraft fiction can be buried, now that

we have the letters, I can appreciate the fact that some may find the letters more rewarding than some of the stories. In any event, if you love the stories (as I do, for all the faults in a few of them) you will be fascinated by the letters.

HPL was very relaxed in stylistic mannerisms when writing to friends, and the editors have done a magnificent job in avoiding errors in reproducing these whimsies. I don't mean that there are not typographical errors that got through uncorrected; but rather that the ones I noticed were all in normal, easily-spelled English usage, and it did not take great effort to see what the word should have been. What is impressive is that there are so few of them.

Heartily Recommended. RAWL

THE GREEN ROUND

by Arthur Machen

Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin 53583; 1968; 218pp; \$3.75.

This, Mr. Machen's last novel, was originally published in 1933 in England, and has never before appeared in an American edition. Mr. Derleth's scrupulous jacket note tells us about this novel that, "Though not on the same plane as his undoubted masterpiece, *The Hill of Dreams*", it is nevertheless of interest to the devotee of the macabre . . ."

My own introduction to Machen (of whom I have read little) came in 1935 when *WEIRD TALES* reprinted his short story, *The Lost Club*. That is a quiet story which

nonetheless can arouse unsettling feelings that add up to horror. Later on, I encountered *The Novel of the Black Seal* and *The Novel of the White Powder*, both more eventful in plot and frightfulness.

The Green Round is closer to *The Lost Club*, and like it is a quiet story of confirmation, rather than shattering revelation; by which I mean, the discerning reader will realize the solution of the mystery fairly early, but not because the author was trying earnestly to conceal it from him. The author is in no hurry to get to the next weird happening, and I should say that if you are *not* completely hooked by the prologue (as I was hooked), if you find the prologue tiresome and are tempted to skim in order to get to where the action is, then this book is not for

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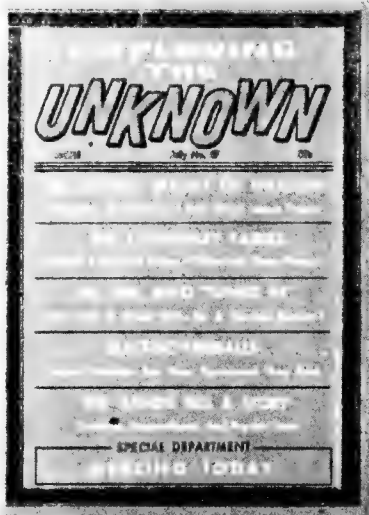
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you. But if the prologue gives just the slightest suggestion of a chill (as it did to me), then you will not only find the entire novel absorbing but experience a type of horror which cannot be found in the thriller sort of weird tale.

Arthur Machen (1863-1947) has not appeared often in the various weird and fantasy magazines; one other story of his was reprinted in *WEIRD TALES: The Bowmen*, the short-short tale which gave rise to the legend of The Angel of Mons. (Whether some individual soldiers may have had visions similar to Machen's inspiration is one thing. I see no reason to doubt that some may have. But there is ample reason

to believe that the widespread legend arose from this story, rather than a few individual psychic experiences.) I can find no record of other reprints in the magazines. This is unfortunate, in a way; for while the fact that none of his stories had their original appearances in the sneered-at pulps has allowed for a sort of literary recognition which is still denied to H. P. Lovecraft, Machen is nowhere nearly so widely read and heard of. Perhaps some reader can tell me if his other books are still in print.

In any event, Arkham House is to be congratulated for bringing us so excellent a "minor" work of one who Lovecraft and others considered a major master in the field. RAWL



It Is Written...

While it was the plea of *Manuel B. Tarshish*, as noted in the blurb for the *Four Prose Poems*, whose requests for *Ex Oblivione*, with the reminder that it was not reprinted in the available collections of HPL's works offered by Arkham House, that led me to re-read this and decide to offer you all four together, I should also mention *Tim Powers*, who has been asking for *What the Moon Brings*. And there have been increasing requests for other Lovecraft stories, as well.

Now the fact is that, outside of the Lancer collections, which make the entire contents of the Arkham House volume, *The Dunwich Horror and Others* generally available at low prices, HPL's stories can be found only in limited editions, aside from a few anthology appearances. Arkham House has a small press run: 3000 copies of *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*, 3500 copies of *Dagon and other Stories*. Some of our readers may own the two original collections; some may have a run of *WEIRD TALES*, but no matter how you add it together, only a minor fraction of you are likely to have any particular Lovecraft story which we might run here. (And it is the members of this fraction who seem to make up the bulk of the active readers, although this is by no means certain.)

I am now engaged in re-reading all the stories in chronological order, and I do think it is time to re-examine the question of running some of the tales outside of the *Dunwich Horror* collection.

In line with this, *Bob Allaire* writes: "If possible, and rest assured it would fully be appreciated, could you include in future issues more stories by H. P. Lovecraft (the 'master' in my opinion), Joseph Payne Brennan, Frank Belknap Long, August Derleth, William Hope Hodgson, Seabury Quinn, and Robert E. Howard.

And if further possible, may a humble reader suggest that stories such as those by Lovecraft and Long wherein man is threatened by 'unspeakable horrors' from the 'outside' deserve to appear more often in your magazine than some of the other story-types."

We certainly intend to run more stories by Long and Derleth; Seabury Quinn we shall continue to offer you in *STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES*, as his de Grandin series has brought warm appreciation from a decided majority of you, the active readers. Robert E. Howard has hardly been neglected, as a check upon our indices shows—and, in fact, considering the number of authors

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on your list who we have not gotten around to offering more of, I must admit that those readers who feel we have leaned a little too heavily on Howard have a point. Space is limited, something I know intellectually, but have to re-learn emotionally almost every time I close an issue of MOH and find that something I had sent off to the printers, in hopes of getting a really fine issue both in quality and balance of material this time, has to be left out.

The quality varies, of course; while my love of these old tales at least approaches infatuation at times, I am not so fatuous as to believe that all are truly on the level of the very best, either of that period, or of the very best new weird and fantasy fiction written and published today. Nor are what I hope will turn out to be the "early" stories of future "names" in the field on the highest level, either. But there is nothing unusual about this. The early stories Derleth, Howard, and HPL himself in some instances, do not show a great deal more than promise of better things to come. Unfortunately, I'm not clairvoyant, so cannot tell which of the new writers we have presented in our pages will turn out to be one or two-timers, etc., and which will fulfill the hopes suggested.

It is not, as I've noted before, any part either of MOH's duty or intentions to present the stories of new writers *simply for the purpose of encouraging new writers*. I select those which I consider at the very least good enough to print; and in any individual instance, being imperfect, I may be in error—just as I may be in error about an old story which I feel is worth reviving.

Coming Soon

**THERE SHALL
BE NO
DARKNESS**

by James Blish

Short-short stories are always needed here to round out the pages; that is why most new stories are of the short-short length. In closing an issue, if it comes down to a choice between using a new short-short, as against a reprint, and there is a reasonable parity of worth between them, I'm moved to give the new author the nod. But I must always bear in mind that, for the most part, we are presenting old stories which (as your letters indicate consistently) most of you desire, and many have never seen before.

This is borne out by *Tim Powers*, who writes from La Mirada, California: "First of all, I think you have the only magazine comparable to *WEIRD TALES* since *WT* itself. Most of the stories are reprints, but (unlike the reprints of another magazine) they are real classics, and unavailable unless you want to buy them in their original appearance in a rare, possibly expensive magazine . . .

"Also, keep up the Robert E. Howard stories. Even the blurbs before Howard stories in your magazines are fascinating. Especially the one for *Valley of the Lost*.

**What Was The Secret
Of The Silent
Slayer ?**

"I know every animal up at Groote Schuur better than I know you, Doctor, and I was born in up-country Africa and have been tens of thousands of miles through it. There's no ape or other animal could make those fingerprints. . ."

There was an awed silence as one after another each man took careful stock of the dark purple marks on the dead woman's wrists. Undoubtedly they were bruises. Each finger, bone for bone, was distinctly traced, but the fingers were connected nearly to their tips with closely woven nets. The hands that had made these marks were webbed as the feet of a duck or, perhaps, as those of a frog.

"No," the doctor admitted presently, and there was a shudder in his voice. "Those hands certainly do not belong to any animal, and they most emphatically don't appear to belong to any human being . . ."

You Won't Want To Miss

**WEBBED
HANDS**

by Ferdinand Berthoud

Complete in the Summer Issue of
**STARTLING MYSTERY
STORIES**

see page 127

Has There Ever Been Such A Thing As A Natural Flyer?

With the exception of Ken Morey there was only one man in Ethiopia who could fly. And there was only one man in the world crazy enough to attempt suicide in a pursuit ship he had never flown, and which he could never land. That man was Jefferson Rolfe. And Morey knew that Rolfe was in the cockpit of the Wasp, climbing up and up to meet the threat of the enemy bombers.

High above, still concealed by the darkness, the enemy bombing formation dived earthward. They came with the complete contempt of men who know well that nothing can oppose them or do them harm. They dived in formation. The thin note of the multi-motors became a shrill screaming. They were over the city — down under five thousand feet. They were suddenly visible. They grew wings out of the blackness. They assumed shape.

*Don't Miss This Utterly Different
Novelet*

BLACK ACE

by GEORGE BRUCE

complete in Issue #4 of

WORLD-WIDE ADVENTURE

see page 127

"Keep getting the Finlay covers; they sure are an improvement over the blood-dripping hand you ran for a couple of issues. Finlay is the *ultimate* fantasy illustrator."

I made one change in your letter, Friend Powers, deleting the specific name of a magazine of which you disapprove. In the old days, it was absolutely taboo to mention the name of any competitive magazine in one's own columns. This I do not go along with; however, I do not consider it seemly to run adverse comments which name other magazines, even if privately I might agree. You may consider this square, or old-fashioned of me, but I maintain that one does not gain respect for one's own product by confessing the sins of competitors, complete with front names, hind names, and addresses.

"Although I am not in college," writes *Richard Brautigan* from 2116 48th Street, Pennsauken, New Jersey, "I would be interested in corresponding with Dave Paskow and others who are writing or plan to write in order to exchange ideas, stories, etc. I am also interested in exchanging back number magazines, namely old *ASTOUNDINGS*, *WEIRD TALES*, etc." Mr. Brautigan found our May issue "a tough one to rate, since all the stories were exceptional."

Marking *The Castle in the Window*, in our July issue, "O" (for "outstanding"), *Peter Wasko* writes from Pottstown Penna: "I read your magazine for the first time as a patient in the hospital but it won't be

the last. I am an avid reader, but never read anything by Steffan Alekti before, but hope to hear more of him. I like the type of stories you print, as I am a constant visitor at the library, hunting mysteries and far-out stories. Keep up the good work."

No, you didn't read anything by Mr. Alekti before, since *The Castle in the Window* was his debut. We have two other stories on hand by him, one of which we hope you will see in this issue.

David Charles Paskow, who has quite a record for early responses to each issue for some time, writes from 817 West 66th Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19126: "For once I liked the cover on an issue of MOH. (I had almost given up hope of this occurring since the Morrow cover on #12.) The red margin setting off the illustration from the black background was effective.

"I am beginning to think that the supply of Robert E. Howard stories is endless. At least, this time, it was not yet another 'hitherto unprinted mss. deciphered only recently', *et cetera*. One gets suspicious after the fifth or sixth newly discovered story. Howard did, after all, live only thirty years and, while he did produce many good stories in that time, much of the fragmentary material found after his death is better left alone. . . . Maybe Howard didn't like these ideas on a later inspection and never intended to expand them."

I have been offered a number of unpublished stories by Robert E. Howard, and have not accepted all

Coming Soon
THE CASE OF THE
SINISTER SHAPE
 by Gordon MacCreagh

Have You Missed These Issues?

#1, August 1963: *The Man With a Thousand Legs*, Frank Belknap Long; *A Thing of Beauty*, Wallace West; *The Yellow Sign*, Robert W. Chambers; *The Maze and the Monster*, Edward D. Hoch; *The Death of Halpin Frayser*, Ambrose Bierce; *Babylon: 70 M.*, Donald A. Wollheim; *The Inexperienced Ghost*, H. G. Wells; *The Unbeliever*, Robert Silverberg; *Fidel Bassin*, W. J. Stamper; *The Last Dawn*, Frank Lillie Pollock, *The Undying Head*, Mark Twain.

#2, November 1963: *The Space-Eaters*, Frank Belknap Long; *The Faceless Thing*, Edward D. Hoch; *The Red Room*, H.G. Wells; *Hungary's Female Vampire*, Dean Lip-top; *A Tough Tussle*, Ambrose Bierce; *Doorslammer*, Donald A. Wollheim; *The Electric Chair*, George Waignt; *The Other One*, Jerry L. Keane; *The Charmer*, Archie Bips; *Clarissa*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *The Strange Ride 'of Morrowbie Jukes*, Rudyard Kipling.

Order From Page 128

Have You Missed These Issues?**#3, Feb. 1964: Out of print.****#4, Sept. 1964: Out of print.**

#5, September 1964: Cassius, Henry S. Whitehead; Love at First Sight, J. L. Miller; Five-Year Contract, J. Vernon Shea; The House of the Worm, Merle Prout, The Beautiful Suit, H. G. Wells; A Stranger Came to Reap, Stephen Dentinger; The Morning the Birds Forgot to Sing, Walt Liebscher; Bones, Donald A. Wollheim; The Ghostly Rental, Henry James.

#6, November 1964: Caverns of Horror, Laurence Manning; Prodigy, Walt Liebscher; The Mask, Robert W. Chambers; The Life-After-Death of Mr. Thaddeus Warde, Robert Barbour Johnson; The Feminine Fraction, David Grinnell; Dr. Heidegger's Experiment, Nathaniel Hawthorne; The Pacer, August Derleth; The Moth, H. G. Wells; The Door to Saturn, Clark Ashton Smith.

#7, January 1965: The Thing From—Outside, George Allan England; Black Thing at Midnight, Joseph Payne Brennan; The Shadows on the Wall, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; The Phantom Farmhouse, Seabury Quinn; The Oblong Box, Edgar Allan Poe; A Way With Kids, Ed M. Clinton; The Devil of the Marsh, E. B. Marriott-Watson; The Shuttered Room, H. P. Lovecraft & August Derleth.

Order From Page 128

of them, as some struck me as being below the "good" level of the stories I read by him during his lifetime. (Meaning that some did not strike me as being good then, nor do they now.) If other editors disagree with me, you will see some of these stories elsewhere, although I doubt that they'll be advertised as "rejected by *MAGAZINE OF HORROR*!"

George H. Wagner, Jr., writes from PO Box 3, Fort Thomas, Kentucky: 41075: "Howard's masterful *Worms of the Earth* is without doubt the best tale of MOH #22; even better than the better-established classics of Kilpling and Blackwood. . .

"May I enter the recent controversy over the literary merits of Burroughs, Howard, Lovecraft, *et al*? Many readers say that adolescent fans become bored with such writers at an early age. This is true, but only to an extent. In my own case, I began reading Poe at twelve, Lovecraft at thirteen, branching out to the science fiction magazines at about fourteen. By the age of nineteen or twenty, the whole field bored me silly. However, about two or three years ago I became 're-addicted' to fantastic literature, and now have—at twenty-seven—a far, far more extensive collection of 'visionary' literature than I ever had in my adolescence. So, the younger fans who say, 'I don't like Burroughs any more—he's too corny and trite,' should wait a few years, till they have some perspective, and see if their old favorite authors aren't favorites again."

Hmm, let's see—I believe I got on to Poe around the age of fourteen, which would be 1930, and Howard

and Lovecraft a year later. Burroughs came in there briefly around the same time, although I was unable to get very much of him: *The Warlord of Mars* from the Library, and *Tarzan of the Apes* (which I rather liked but not enough to look for any more Tarzan stories then); later *The Pirates of Venus* and *Lost on Venus* in ARGOSY. And BLUE BOOK had *Swords of Mars*. But it wasn't until the 40's that I got an opportunity to read the rest of the John Carter books, which were and remain my favorites with ERB, although, having finally gotten to the Pellucidar series and the rest of the Venus series, they remain enjoyable. Tarzan I find fun to read, but do not bother to keep after one reading, while the other three series promise enjoyment again in the future. (The exception is the Tarzan novel which is really part of the Pellucidar series—a sneaky thing for ERB to do, but I'm glad he did it!) *The Land that Time Forgot* still strikes me as one of the best, while I'd just as soon that he'd forgotten to write *The Moon Maid*—or at least the two sequels to it.

Yes, at various times I put all of them behind me, and I'm afraid delivered eloquent monologues on their utter lack of worth; however, the last time that happened I'd managed by good luck to retain enough perspective so that I didn't dispose of all the books and magazines, but just put them away, calculating that I might want them again some day—and I'd discarded and re-collected magazines and books so many times! So now I keep them and wait to see which crumbles to dust first, the collection or RAWL.

Coming Soon
THE WHITE DOG
by Feodor Sologub

Have You Missed These Issues?

#8, April 1965: *The Black Legion*, William J. Makin; *The Hand of Glory*, R. H. D. Barham; *The Garrison*, David Grinnell; *Passeur*, Robert W. Chambers; *The Lady of the Velvet Collar*, Washington Irving; *Jack*, Reynold Junker; *The Burglar-Proof Vault*, Oliver Taylor; *The Dead Who Walk*, Ray Cummings.

#9, June 1965: *The Night Wire*, H. F. Arnold; *Sacrilege*, Wallace West; *All the Stain of Long Delight*, Jerome Clark; *Skulls in the Stars*, Robert E. Howard; *The Photographs*, Richard Marsh; *The Distortion out of Space*, Francis Flagg; *Guarantee Period*, William M. Danner; *The Door in the Wall*, H. G. Wells; *The Three Low Masses*, Alphonse Daudet; *The Whistling Room*, William Hope Hodgson.

#10, August 1965: *The Girl at Heddon's*, Pauline Kappel Priluck; *The Torture of Hope*, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam; *The Cloth of Madness*, Seabury Quinn; *The Tree*, Gerald W. Page; *In the Court of the Dragon*, Robert W. Chambers; *Flacide's Wife*, Kirk Mashburn; *Come Closer*, Joanna Russ; *The Rage of the Living Dead*, A. Hyatt Verrill.

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Have You Missed These Issues?

#11, November 1965: *The Empty Zoo*, Edward D. Hoch; *A Psychological Shipwreck*, Ambrose Bierce; *The Call of the Mech-Men*, Laurence Manning; *Was It a Dream?*, Guy de Maupassant; *Under the Hau Tree*, Katherine Yates; *The Head of Du Bois*, Dorothy Norman Cooke; *The Dweller in Dark Valley*, (verse) Robert E. Howard; *The Devil's Pool*, Grege la Spina.

#12, Winter 1965/66: *The Faceless God*, Robert Bloch; *Master Nicholas*, Seabury Quinn; *But Not the Herald*, Roger Zelazny; *Dr. Muncing, Exorcist*, Gordon MacCreagh; *The Affair at 7 Rue de M.*, John Steinbeck; *The Man in the Dark*, Irwin Ross; *The Abyss*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *Destination* (verse), Robert E. Howard; *Memories of HPL*, Muriel E. Eddy; *The Black Beast*, Henry S. Whitehead.

#13, Summer 1966: *The Thing in the House*, H. F. Scotten; *Divine Madness*, Roger Zelazny; *Valley of the Lost*, Robert E. Howard; *Hereditry*, David H. Keller; *Dwelling of the Righteous*, Anna Hunger; *Almost Immortal*, Austin Hall.

#14, Winter 1966/67: *The Lair of Star-Spawn*, Derleth & Scherer; *The Vacant Lot*, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; *Proof*, S. Fowler Wright; *Comes No: v The Power*, Roger Zelazny; *The Moth Message*, Laurence Manning; *The Friendly Demon*, Daniel DeFoe; *Dark Hollow*, Emil Petaja; *An Inhabitant of Carcosa*, Ambrose Bierce; *The Monster-God of Mamiurth*, Edmond Hamilton.

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

(continued from page 5)

he enjoyed roaming alone at night, he enjoyed walks with congenial acquaintances no less. And a man who did not hesitate to roam as far as South Carolina in one direction, and Canada in another, whenever the economic situation permitted it, can hardly be called a recluse!

In short, *he knew what he wanted*. He saw himself far more clearly than many of us see ourselves; he knew his limitations, and neither whined about them or wasted time beating his head against them. He discovered what was good for him, given his predictions; was aware of the price he would have to pay for adhering to his standards and tastes in every aspect of life, and paid it with a minimum of complaint. And even his complaints mostly boil down to deploring the types of stupidity he encountered which made matters much more difficult for all than they need have been. In his younger days, he took on certain affectations, as nearly any intelligent youngster of either sex does; as he matured, the affectations mellowed into affections (which he could regard with humor, and often did), or were dropped as of no further use under the circumstances. Biases, and highly emotional biases some of them were, he always had; but they never degenerated into prejudices. And the record shows modification or even outright abandonment in a wide number of instances—something quite impossible in the case of prejudices. As August Derleth states in his "Final Notes" in *The Dark Brotherhood*, dealing with

some of the myths—and some of them pernicious—about HPL: "He continued to regret change; he expressed his regret in poem and story (as in *Brick Row*, for instance); but the violent antipathies were no more."

As is the case with many other authors, some of the adverse criticism of his stories is rooted in the critic's failure to comprehend what HPL was actually doing, and thus, in effect, denounce a record player for not being fit to wash clothes in—both machines contains things that whirl, you know. I myself was extricated from this sort of trap only recently upon re-reading Fritz Leiber's essay, "A Literary Copernicus" in *Something About Cats*. Speaking of the three important elements in Lovecraft's style, Mr. Leiber notes:

"The first is the device of *confirmation*, rather than revelation. (I am indebted to Henry Kuttner for this neat phrase.) In other words, the story-ending does not come as a surprise but as a final, long-anticipated 'convincer'. The reader knows, *and is supposed to know* (my emphasis: RAWL), what is coming, but this only prepares and adds to his shivers when the narrator supplies the last and incontrovertible piece of evidence. In *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* the reader knows from almost the first page that Ward has been supplanted by Joseph Curwen, yet the narrator does not state this unequivocally until the last sentence of the book."

I was taught in school that the way to write mystery stories was the revelatory way; and, of course, if that is the only way, then many of HPL's stories are failures, and *The*

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#15, Spring 1967: *The Room of Shadows*, Arthur J. Burks; *Lillies*, Robert A. W. Lowndes; *The Flaw*, J. Vernon Shea; *The Doom of London*, Robert Barr; *The Vale of Lost Women*, Robert E. Howard; *The Ghoul Gallery*, Hugh B. Cave.

#16, Summer 1967: *Night and Silence*, Maurice Level; *Lazarus*, Leonid Andreyeff; *Mr. Octbur*, Joseph Payne Brennan; *The Dog That Laughed*, Charles Willard Diffin; *Ah, Sweet Youth*, Pauline Kappel Priluck; *The Man Who Never Was*, R. A. Lafferty; *The Leadon Ring*, S. Baring-Gould; *The Monster of the Prophecy*, Clark Ashton Smith.

#17, Fall 1967: *A Sense of Crawling*, Robert Edmond Alter; *The Laughing Duke*, Wallace West; *Dermod's Bane*, Robert E. Howard; *The Spell of the Sword*, Frank Aubry; *"Williamson"*, Henry S. Whitehead; *The Curse of Amen-Ra*, Victor Rousseau.

#18, November 1967: *In Amundsen's Tent*, John Martin Leahy; *Transient and Immortal*, Jim Haught; *Out of the Deep*, Robert E. Howard; *The Bibliophile*, Thomas Boyd; *The Ultimate Creature*, R. A. Lafferty; *Wolves of Darkness*, Jack Williamson.

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Have You Missed These Issues?

#19, January 1968: *The Red Witch*, Nicotín Dyalhis; *The Last Letter From Norman Underwood*, Larry Eugene Meredith; *The Jewels of Vishnu*, Harriet Bennett; *The Man From Cincinnati*, Holloway Horn; *Ground Afire*, Anna Hunger; *The Wind In The Rose-Bush*, Mary Wilkins-Freeman; *The Last of Placide's Wife*, Kirk Mashburn; *The Years are as a Knife*, (verse) Robert E. Howard.

#20, March 1968: *The Siren of the Snakes*, Arlton Eadie; *The Ruck*, G. G. Ketcham; *A Cry From Beyond*, Victor Rousseau; *Only Gone Before*, Emil Petajä; *The Voice*, Nell Kay; *The Monsters*, Murray Leinster.

#21, May 1968: *Kings of the Night*, Robert E. Howard; *The Cunning of Private Rogoff*, David A. English; *The Brain-Eaters*, Frank Belknap Long; *A Psychical Invasion* (part one), Algernon Blackwood; *Nasturtia*, Col. S. P. Meek; *The Dark Star*, G. G. Pendarves.

#22, July 1968: *Worms of the Earth*, Robert E. Howard; *Come*, Anna Hunger; *They Called Him Ghost*, Laurence J. Cahill; *The Phantom 'Rickshaw*, Rudyard Kipling; *The Castle in the Window*, Stefan B. Aletti; *A Psychical Invasion*, (part two), Algernon Blackwood.

#23, September 1968: *The Abyss* (part one), David H. Keller, M.D.; *The Death Mask*, Mrs. H. D. Everett; *One By One*, Richard M. Hodgins; *The Thirteenth Floor*, Douglas M. Dold; *Leapers*, Robert A. W. Lowndes.

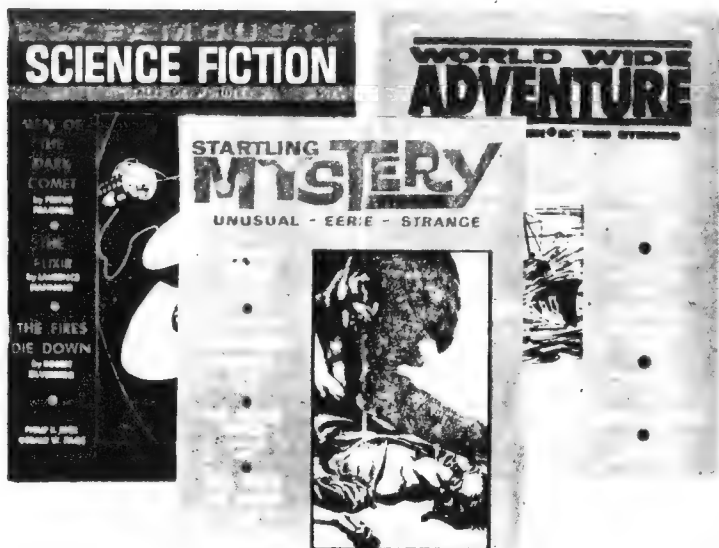
Case of Charles Dexter Ward, one of the most dismal, since (as Jack Chalker notes) the essential revelation is right there in the quotation with which the story opens.

But, as Watson would say when Holmes explained the obvious, "How absurdly simple". True; it is simple. But the reader who has been misled as I was by early teaching may have been blindfolded to the obvious, as I was.

HPL, as Leiber notes, did write some revelatory stories. He lists *The Lurking Fear* and *The Outsider*, citing the latter as less successful. I would put *In The Vault* as better than either of them.

Someone stated that perhaps it was just as well that Lovecraft died in 1937, for, considering, his love of England and most things British (18th century, that is), the events of 1940 would have been unendurable agony to him. Perhaps . . . but I doubt it. That his sufferings would have been intense (as were those of many Americans who loved England), there is no question; but I have a feeling that this might have brought the inner toughness of him unmistakably to the surface. However, since none of us can know for sure, one opinion is probably as good as another in this matter.

I think of him these days, in a sense, as I think of Cyrano de Bergerac. In his own way, HPL was a heroic character, and like Cyrano, whatever misfortunes befell him, he maintained his daintiness, and his white plume remained unsullied. I wonder of how many of his detractors this will be said, when the summing up comes; or for that matter, of how many of the rest of us. RAWL.



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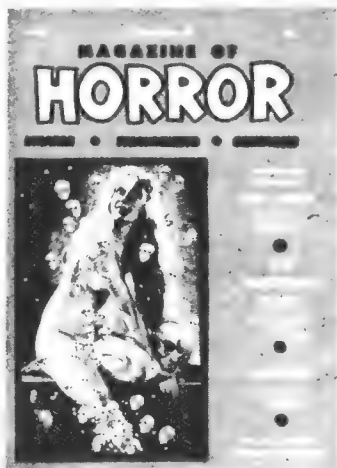
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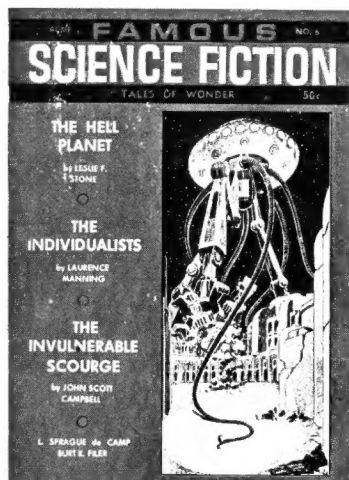
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